

JENNY WREN'S TRAMP.

BY MISS JULIA VAN BRUNN.

JENNY WREN lived in a little house in the woods, she and her mother. The house was a little one, as I have said, and it had a little square entry about big enough for a trunk to set in, and it had two square rooms, with a door between them, on the side of the chimney that was opposite the entry. There wasn't any up-stairs. The outside of the house was dark, almost black, from having never been painted, and there was a big chimney in the middle of the roof, a window each side of the door, and a window at each end. There was a little garden in front, with a rail fence round it, of the same color as the house; and outside of that were woods and woods. Nothing else was to be seen, except the brown road that ran by the front of the house.

The nearest neighbor they had was Mr. Smith, who lived four miles away, where the

railroad crossed the road on which Jennie and her mother lived.

Jennie was a little girl about eight years old, and as smart as a steel-trap. She could wash and iron, if the things were not too large; she could cook several things; she could sweep and dust, and wash up the hearth, and make the bed, and put things to rights; she could mend stockings, and dresses, and other things; she could make gruel for her mother when she was sick, and comb and smooth her hair to cure a headache, and put hot rocks to her feet if she got a chill; and she could keep her own round, rosy-cheeked face as clean as a pink, and her bright black eyes wide open to see what was going on about her, and her thick, short, black hair as smooth as curly, wriggling hair can be.

Now, of course, you think that this is a great deal for one little girl to do; but Jenny

could do more. She had out-door duties as well as in-door. She could feed the hens and chickens, and find the eggs, and gather the whole flock, and shut them every night into the little shed where their nests and roosts were. She could gather sticks from the woods to keep their fire going; she could dig in their little garden, and make things grow as fast as you ever saw; and she could, by trying very hard, let the currants and gooseberries get ripe before she ate them.

I'm tired of telling the things she could do, and I haven't told half; but I shall let the rest go, for I want to tell a little about Jenny's mother, and then about Jenny's tramp.

Mrs. Wren was a poor, thin little woman, who was never very well, and who was always sad and pale. You see, she felt badly at having to live all alone in the woods with Jenny, and never having a soul else to speak to, or a chance to go to church, or for Jenny to go to school. But she couldn't help herself, because she was poor, and had no husband nor friends to help her, and wasn't strong enough to work.

Jenny was so strong, and bright, and cheerful, that she used to make her mother forget her troubles sometimes; and I'm sure I don't know what Mrs. Wren would have done without her.

Now I am ready to tell my story.

One day, just about noon, as Mrs. Wren sat by the window darning stockings, and watching Jenny, who was in the yard putting up long poles for the morning-glories to climb on, they saw an oldish woman coming along the road. This old woman was very plainly dressed, and had a pretty good sized bundle in her hand; and when she turned into the path that led up to their gate, they saw that she had gray hair, blue eyes, a ruddy face, and quite a long nose.

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Wren, from the window, "it's Mrs. Polly Watson, as true as I live!" And she dropped the stocking that she was darning, and ran out to meet this woman, and hugged and kissed her, and told her how glad she was to see her; and then she began to cry as hard as she could cry.

"That looks a sight like being glad!" said Mrs. Polly Watson, in a way that you might think was cross; but if you just looked at her, you would see that she looked as kind as anybody could look, and that one tear was hanging on her yellowish eye-lashes, and another tear rolling down toward the end of her nose.

"It's so long since I've seen anybody, not

to speak of the years since I saw you last," Mrs. Wren said, wiping her eyes. "Come right in. Jenny, come here, child, and see Mrs. Watson!"

Jenny went, hanging her head a little, for she didn't see much company, and was rather bashful when she had to stand up to be looked at. But Mrs. Watson took her by the chin, and lifted her face, which she examined till it grew as red as a beet, and till tears stood in the bright black eyes. Then she gave the little girl's arm a soft squeeze, let go her chin, and kissed her on her hot cheek, saying:

"I have my doubts about your being the real Jenny Wren. She was a milky-faced little baby when last I saw her. But you are a pretty nice little girl, and I will see how you behave."

Then Mrs. Wren took off her visitor's bonnet and shawl, and gave her the rocking-chair that was covered with patchwork, and they both sat down to talk over old times, while Jenny made ready to get dinner.

"To think," said Mrs. Watson, "of our both being made widows since we used to live in Greenburg together! But I haven't got chick nor child, and you've got a nice little lassie."

You see, Mrs. Watson liked to look at the bright side of things, and to make people see that they were not so badly off as they might be.

While they talked, Jenny flew round like a parched pea. She went into the garden, and dug up a hill of potatoes, and she picked an apron full of cranberry beans, and broke a summer squash, and two cucumbers from their vines. Then she got these things ready to cook, filled the big wooden pail with sparkling water, from a boiling spring at the back of the house, and lighted a fire in the fireplace.

All these things she did in the quickest and neatest manner, and she felt quite proud to be waiting on company.

"Well, what a nice little housekeeper, to be sure!" said Mrs. Watson, who had been watching her all the time.

Jenny smiled, and blushed, and felt as though she grew an inch taller that very minute.

Then Mrs. Wren got up to see to dinner. But they didn't stop talking.

"I feel pretty well tired out," Mrs. Watson said, rocking herself comfortably in the cushioned chair, and watching Jenny put up the leaves of the table, and smooth a clean, white

clash out over it. "I came from Waverly yesterday, and took the stage along to Smith's out here. They hadn't a horse at home, or they'd have brought me over. But I said to myself that I wouldn't wait for a horse to come. I've walked ten miles at a time in my day, and it's a pity if I can't walk four now. I haven't quite lost the use of my limbs." And she laughed.

I am not going to describe all that was said and done in the little black house during the next three days. The two women talked till it was a wonder their tongues didn't drop off, and Mrs. Wren told everything she knew over and over again. Mrs. Watson told almost everything over and over again; but there was one thing which she didn't tell at all just then. And that one thing was the reason why she had taken such a sudden notion to visit her old friend, Mrs. Wren.

But on the fourth day, toward evening, Mrs. Watson didn't feel well, and during the night Mrs. Wren had to get something hot for her to drink, and rub her, and dose her in various ways. In the mornings she felt a little easier, but in the afternoon of the fifth day she was taken suddenly worse, and they didn't know what to do. She was all twisted up with cramps, and was in such distress, that she screamed loud enough to frighten the hens and chickens nearly out of their wits, and make all the birds and squirrels in the woods near open their eyes a great deal rounder than they ever opened them before.

And besides her pain of body, she seemed to be in distress of mind. She kept saying, "O dear, they'll get it after all! What shall I do? They'll get it! I shall die, and they'll get it!"

"What is it that troubles you, dear?" asked Mrs. Wren, who was weeping with distress and alarm. "What is it that they'll get, and who will get it?"

"Mrs. Wren," said the sick woman, suddenly, "I am going to die."

"O, don't talk so!" sobbed Jenny's mother, and Jenny herself began to cry. For, really, the poor woman did look shockingly, and it was as likely as not that she would die, as she said.

"I shall die," Mrs. Watson went on, looking steadily at Jenny's mother, "and the thing that I care most to do will be undone, unless I can get a letter to Greenburg to-night."

Now Greenburg was a pretty large town, about ten miles from Mr. Smith's house. Mr. Smith's house, you recollect, was four miles from Mrs. Wren's.

"What can we do?" said Mrs. Wren. "I can't leave you."

"I'll go and take the letter to Mr. Smith's, and the stage-driver will take it to Greenburg to-night," said Jenny, eagerly.

"Can you walk four miles?" asked Mrs. Watson, looking at the bright, resolute face of Jenny. "Aren't you afraid of the woods?"

"I am not a bit afraid," Jenny said.

Well, the upshot of the matter was, that Mrs. Watson wrote a little letter, writing and groaning by turns, as the sick fits came on her, and Jenny put on her sun-bonnet and started for Mr. Smith's. Mrs. Wren was a little anxious, for Jenny had never been so far alone before; but she could not refuse her dying friend. So she gave Jenny a hundred charges, and put a luncheon in her pocket, and kissed her, and sent her off, looking after her as she went down to the road, stepping smartly, full of the importance of her errand.

"You tell Mr. Smith to bring you back, and I will give him two dollars for his trouble," Mrs. Watson said, as Jenny went out the door. Then she began to turn and twist again, and to cry out, "O dear! O dear!"

After that fit was over, Mrs. Wren ran out and down to the road that ran straight for a long way; and there, half a mile away, was a little figure, with a pink sun-bonnet on, tramping away as steady as a mill.

"Bless the child!" said Jenny's mother, wiping her eyes so that she could see plainly. "I pray God no harm may happen to her! She's a little Trojan, if there ever was one!"

Jenny walked steadily on, thinking that she was doing something very great; and that she hoped poor Mrs. Watson would get well; and that her mother was real good to give her the nice luncheon, and that she was the best mother in the world; and that she would like to know what Mrs. Watson had in that big bead bag of hers; and that she guessed the Smiths would think that she was smart, when they saw her coming there all alone; and that she didn't see how in the world she was going to ask that great Mr. Smith to carry her home in his wagon; and that it was a nice day for a walk; and that she hoped her shoes wouldn't come in holes before she got to Mr. Smith's; and that—but how am I to know all the thoughts that passed through Jenny Wren's little head during that wonderful walk?

When about half way, she sat down on a rock at the roadside, and ate her luncheon, and rested herself, as her mother told her to

do; though she didn't feel a bit tired. Indeed, she would have liked to run, and would have done so, but her mother had told her not to.

So, after her luncheon, she walked steadily on again, thinking about all sorts of things, her eyes as bright as stars, and her cheeks as pink as wild roses. All the little wild things in the woods, on both sides of the road, seemed to take a great fancy to her. Birds twittered and chattered at her, and flew across the road so low, and so near, that she felt the wind their wings made, and they almost touched her pink sun-bonnet, saying as plain as could be, "catch me if you can!"

Squirrels hopped about, and eyed her as though they thought that she was a most uncommon little person. One squirrel whisked across the road just in front of her, and she ran after him, thinking that she might catch him by the tail. But he ran up a tree, with his tail curled over his back, and got out of her reach. A little brown rabbit hopped along by the side of the road, and kept looking back at her, as though he wanted to run a race with her; but the minute she began to run, he dived into the woods, and ran out of sight.

By-and-by, she came in sight of Mr. Smith's house, which had quite a clearing round it. She was glad, for she was beginning to be tired; but she was also a little afraid, for she was not used to speaking for herself. Besides, there was an awful great black dog lying on the door-step. She looked a long time before she dared go near him; but, presently, she saw some one look out of the window, then Fanny Smith came out to meet her.

"Why, Jenny Wren, where have you come from?" cried Fanny.

"From home," Jenny said, without daring to look up; for Fanny was a good girl fourteen years old, and wore a gold pin to fasten her collar, and had on heeled boots.

"But you didn't come all alone?" said Fanny.

"Yes," Jenny said, her pride giving her courage, so that she told the whole story.

"Father and mother have gone down to Greenburg in the wagon," Fanny said. "If you had been here sooner, they could have taken the letter as well as not. Who is it to? Let me see. Why, it's to Lawyer Mace! What can she want of him? I should think that she would want a doctor, or a minister. "Well, you will have to give it to the stage-driver. Come in. I'm all alone. The boys are off in the woods, and nobody will be back

till dark. Let me see, it's half past five o'clock. The stage will be along at seven, or a little after. Shall I give your letter to the driver?"

"I guess I'll give it to him myself," Jenny said, timidly, not feeling safe about trusting the important document in any hands but the driver's.

"O, are you going to wait?" asked Fanny. "Well, take a chair."

Jenny waited, and waited, and the day waned, and it was past seven o'clock when the stage-coach drew up at the door, to see if there were any passengers, or packages.

Jenny went out quite eagerly, but when she saw the red-faced man sitting away up on the box, she felt quite ashamed of herself, and didn't dare to speak. But he called out in a loud, good-natured voice, "Hullo! have you got a letter for me, little red-cheeks?"

"No sir; it's for Lawyer Mace," she said, in a trembling voice, that was about as loud as the purring of a kitten.

"Well, do you want me to give it to him?" asked the man, laughing.

"Yes sir, if you please," Jenny said, still more timidly; for she thought that she must be appearing very ridiculously, when such a big man, so very high up, too, would laugh at her.

He reached down, took the letter, and put it in his inside breast-pocket.

"Mrs. Watson wants him to have it to-night," Jenny ventured to say. "She is dying."

"Dying, is she?" exclaimed the driver. "By George! Well, he shall have it."

Then he snapped his long whip, and the stage rolled away.

Well, pretty soon Jenny started for home. Fanny Smith said that her father and mother would not be at home for more than an hour, and Jenny felt afraid to ask Mr. Smith to take her home so late. So she thought as she had walked one way, she would walk the other.

The sun was setting when she started, and the woods were all full of long, golden beams of light, that lay flickering and shining among the shadows. The birds were singing their little ones to sleep, and all the little four-legged animals were going home to supper. The trees were so tall that the road was in shadow mostly; but the yellow sunlight lay across it in streaks.

Jenny would count the streaks as she walked over them, and keep looking out for

the next, and saying, "now I'm one streak nearer home." For she was tired, and was beginning to feel a little lonesome. When she went the other way, she had been thinking of what the Smiths would say, and how she should give the letter to the driver; but now she had nothing to think of but how tired she was, and how lonesome, and what a dreadful long way it was, to be sure.

Presently there weren't any more sunny streaks, for the sun had gone down; and, looking up from the road to the sky, Jenny saw something that frightened her. There, at a little distance before her in the road, was a cow, coming toward her at a gallop; tearing along as if she were insane, shaking her horns, and kicking up her heels so that you could see them over her back.

Poor Jenny Wren came near sinking down with terror. She had only strength enough to run out into the woods, and hide behind a rock. The cow came galloping along, and Jenny hoped that she would go by. But, no. She turned into the woods, as if in search of Jenny, and stood there staring about, and shaking her head. Jenny lay quite still, but her heart beat with great loud thumps against her side, and she felt herself shaking all over. O, suppose that horrible cow should see her, and should rush at her, and should stick her dreadful horns through her, and should toss and trample her all to pieces! Jenny felt herself grow cold thinking of it. She wished that she had never started to go away alone so far, or that she had waited at Mr. Smith's for some one to carry her home. But as she crouched there trembling, and not daring to cry aloud, but with tears running silently over her pale cheeks, she remembered that when people are in trouble they must pray. She had heard her mother say so. So she began and whispered, "Now I lay me down to sleep." Which wasn't a very suitable prayer for the occasion, to be sure; but I suppose that the One who hears prayers didn't mind that. When the prayer was ended, Jenny peeped, and saw that the cow had turned, and was looking the other way from her. So she got up and began to creep away, and after going a piece in the woods, she ventured to get into the road again. And then if she didn't run! Her feet scarcely touched the ground, and she lost her sun-bonnet, and her apron came untied, and dropped in the road. But she didn't stop to pick them up, but fled on.

And after a minute, she heard a sound be-

hind her, gallop, gallop; and there was that fierce cow full chase after her! When Jenny heard it, her knees grew so weak that she came near falling. But she managed to creep into the woods again, and to climb a rock this time. Nearer and nearer came the galloping, but instead of coming into the woods, the cow ran by. Jenny waited a little while, then got down from her rock, and went on through the woods. She didn't dare go into the road again, but she took the direction homeward as well as she could. It was growing dark now, and she could scarcely see her way. She stumbled and fell over sticks, and logs, and stumps, and in brooks, and wet places. She cried, and sobbed, and tore her clothes on brambles, and scratched her hands and face. But she would not give up, but walked on the best way she could. She thought that she had been walking for hours and hours, and perhaps she had; and still there was no sign of home. Then she began to think that she was lost in the woods, and would die there, and the robins would cover her over with leaves, as they did the babes in the wood. So Jenny cried still more bitterly, and tried to find the road again; but she could not. She wandered, and searched in the darkness, but no home, and no road.

"O mother, mother, mother!" she cried; and again, "O mother!"

By-and-by she heard steps near her, and something came toward her, snapping and crackling the branches and underbrush. "O! was it that dreadful cow again?"

She dropped down and waited, and the something came and smelt round her, and poked its nose into her face, and touched her with big, rough paws, and then took her arm in his mouth and gave it a little bite. At that, Jenny started up, and gave such a scream that it echoed all through the forest. The animal, whatever it was, probably a bear, was so frightened at that, that he dropped her arm, and hurried on as fast as he could. As for Jenny, she fell down again, and I suppose she fainted, only she didn't know it. She thought that she went to sleep a little while.

When she woke up, and remembered where she was, she got up and went on again as long as she could. She had no strength to cry or scream, but just stumbled on, and picked herself up when she fell. At length she could go no further, and she sank down on the ground, and bethought herself to pray again. And the Lord heard her. I think that this is the way it was.

"The Lord Jesus heard her, and said to an angel, "See that poor little child, lost and weeping in the woods! Her flesh is torn with thorns, as mine once was; her little feet are weary, as mine were many a time; her heart is overburdened with sorrow, as mine was while I lived on earth. Go and take this child of mine, and lift her up, and lead her to her own home. She is my child, for she called on me!"

Then the angel came to poor little Jenny Wren, where she lay faintly sobbing, and aching, and smarting all over, and made her think to open her eyes, and look through the trees. And as she looked she saw a light twinkle. At that sight she felt herself grow strong again. She got up, and with a gasping "O! O! O!" that was half joy and half fear, ran on a little way. And there was her own home with a lamp in the window.

Mrs. Wren was walking the floor, and wringing her hands, and Mrs. Watson, who was much better, was sitting up in bed and trying to comfort her, when Jenny appeared in the door, and dropped fainting into her mother's arms.

Such a time as there was! And after a while, when Jenny had been washed, and dosed, and kissed, and pitied, and praised, and kissed again, Mrs. Polly Watson told what she came out there for, and what she wanted of Lawyer Mace.

"I suppose you think that I am poor," she said, sitting up in bed with a shawl round

her, with Mrs. Wren sitting on the foot of the bed, and with Jenny lying across the foot, with her head in her mother's lap. "I suppose you think so, but you are mistaken. Mr. Watson left me poor; but last year my brother Eben—you remember Eben, Mrs. Wren—died and left me a heap of money. I've got as pretty a cottage and garden in Waverly as you would wish to see, and money in the bank; and I can keep a girl, and a horse and chaise, and a boy to take care of 'em. I come to have you go and live with me all the rest of your lives. I don't mean the Watson folks shall get a cent of my property. When I die, I am going to give it to Jenny Wren, and I want Lawyer Mace to make my will. But I don't believe I shall die now."

Well, Mrs. Wren and Jenny were greatly astonished and delighted, and the next day Lawyer Mace came and made the will, in which everything was left to Jenny, when Mrs. Watson should die; and after a few days they all made ready to move.

Now they all live in Waverly, in the pretty cottage, and are as happy as the days are long. Jenny goes to school, and is as smart at her books as she used to be at her work. And Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Wren talk from morning till night, so that it is a wonder to hear them. But the more they talk, the more their tongues get limber, and they never seem to get tired, especially of praising Jenny.

But I guess Jenny Wren will never forget that tramp she had, nor that awful, awful cow!

JOHN GRAHAM'S RESOLUTION.

BY KATE PUTNAM.

JOHN GRAHAM was thirty-six—handsome, wealthy, unmarried, and the object of ceaseless attentions from manœuvring mammas with marriageable daughters. But to these advances he did not seem inclined to respond. Fast young men, with whom, for some inexplicable reason, our hero was very popular, declared that Graham was “a brick,” and wondered “why the deuce he didn’t marry,” since he was far from averse to the society of ladies, appearing, indeed, rather to have a partiality for it than otherwise. But, spite of flattering attentions on the one hand, and wonderings on the other, John Graham not only remained unmarried, but showed no disposition to marry. There is a reason, wise men assert, for everything under the sun, consequently there must have been one, we suppose, for John Graham’s steady resistance to all matrimonial inducements for the last ten or fifteen years. For explanation we must go back to his boyhood when many of the young ladies who now smiled on him were lying in their cradles, pink, helpless bundles of humanity, sucking their thumbs and making round eyes in blissful unconsciousness of mundane matters.

At this time Alfred Graham, John’s father, was a merchant in a small city, possessing, apparently, all the advantages one could desire; education, wealth, good family, and, last but not least, a remarkably pretty wife. But at times we judge somewhat superficially. Alfred Graham, very early in life, had married a girl whose beauty was her sole attraction. Yet not quite that; her powers of dissimulation were fully equal, and gave her face and manner an artificial sweetness which found no corresponding quality in her character.

But Alfred Graham had been too violently in love to discern the true nature of Miss Eleanor Hayes, who, yielding to his persuasions, married him after a brief ball-room acquaintance. Constant companionship, however, afforded ample opportunity for the study of each other’s characteristics, and not many years elapsed before, with strong reaction, Mr. Graham had fallen completely out of love with his beautiful wife.

So John grew up in that dreariest of all atmospheres, a loveless household. It was almost as if the boy had neither father nor mother, the former being constantly immersed in business, the latter in fashion and society. Much as he might long for the love of both parents, it was never given. Mrs. Graham was indifferent and worldly, while her husband could hardly endure the sight of the son who bore so strong a resemblance, personally, to his mother. Thus, through no fault of his own, the poor boy was left much to himself, which naturally made him thoughtful and self-reliant beyond his years. Child as he was, he felt the dissimilarity between his home and those of many of his young playfellows, and, as he grew older, could define it. He saw how those two natures could never, by any process, become truly united, but must with every year of life grow further and further asunder, although he, possessing something of both, naturally felt drawn toward each.

As time went on, Mrs. Graham began to be proud of her handsome son, the only sort of love of which she was capable. Society admired him, and society was her idol. Presently her mind was exercised in regard to a future daughter-in-law, forgetful that this was

more especially John's affair. When, at last, her fastidious taste had selected a young lady in every way unexceptionable, she was greatly displeased to find that her son did not fall in with the idea. In vain did she appeal for sympathy to her husband, who hated the subject, and would reply that if John took his advice he would never marry. This, Mrs. Graham called unkind, and insisted upon considering herself generally ill-treated. But neither tears nor lamentations could move John. He was like a rock against which the fretful waves beat in vain. Thinking of his father's wasted life—for what is pecuniary success embittered by home disappointment?—he steeled himself against all his mother's arguments, with a resolution that he never would marry until he met the right one, come she never so late.

So the years passed by. Father and mother at length lay side by side in the quiet churchyard, done with the cares of life, indifferent to its petty troubles and delights. When John looked on his father's face for the last time, he could only be thankful that the weary strife was over, the worn spirit at rest; and still, as he gazed, the tears rose to his eyes at thought of the utter loneliness of his past life, its whole happiness wrecked by one fatal mistake.

Mrs. Graham wore fashionable mourning, had consultations with Madame L—— as to the depth of hems, the thickness of crape, and the various paraphernalia of grief, most careful in every way to show a proper respect to the memory of the dead. But the contrast between this flimsy woe and the reality of death made John indignant. He said to himself that, had he followed his mother's advice, he too, perhaps, might have been mourned in like manner, some day. This mockery at least he had escaped, loveless as his life might be, or lonely his death.

Mrs. Graham did not long survive her husband, and John, without a near relative, was left heir to a large estate. Still he remained single, while, as time went on, friend after friend was married.

"Why don't you follow my example, you solitary dog?" asked Charles Woodburne, as John was smoothing the fair curls of his little six-year-old Christie.

"Perhaps I may, some day," answered John, laughing.

"But seriously, Graham, until you have a wife you don't know what happiness is."

John smiled.

"You may be right," he responded, "I dare say you are; but the difficulty is to find the wife."

Here the little Christie, who had been an interested auditor of the conversation, turning her large blue eyes from one speaker to the other, lisped out, with childish gravity:

"I'll be your wife, Mr. Graham."

This announcement elicited a laugh from both of the gentlemen.

"Don't be rash, Christie," said her father. "Honestly, though," turning to his friend, "if I were middle-aged, now, and Christie grown up, nothing would please me better. An odd idea, old fellow, for you to be my son-in-law, but I only hope this little girl may sometime marry just such an one as you. I don't want to flatter you, Graham, but upon my word you are about the best fellow I ever saw!"

"That's the partiality of an old friend," answered John, laughing, but at the same time a singular thought was dawning in his mind. What if he should sometime marry this fairy sitting on his knee? How did it matter that he was twenty years her senior, if, in her, Time fulfilled his ideal? He was extremely fond of her, and she, in her turn, loved nothing better than to sit upon his knee, nestling her soft head against his shoulder.

This was a pleasant dream, but, like many another as pleasant, did not seem likely to be realized. Charles Woodburne removing to California shortly after, in order to pursue the law, his friend knew nothing more of him for some years. One day, however, chancing to take up a California newspaper, he saw a notice of Charles Woodburne's death in San Francisco.

As he read, all the old times came back to John's memory; the pleasant face of Mrs. Woodburne, the pretty, six-year-old Christie, the rosy, crowing baby, and, above all, the husband and father, his old friend, manly and noble, as he must be to gain the esteem of John Graham.

What a terrible loss for his wife and children! thought John. Now if I died, fortunately, there is no one to miss me very much.

Yet Mr. Graham sighed as he made this reflection, and his heart softened considerably toward Miss Julia Symonds, who, report averred, was by no means unwilling to become Mrs. Graham. The gentleman himself, though too modest, perhaps, to hold so extreme an opinion, could not fail to perceive

her interest in him, which naturally became a bond between them. For, in general, to even a sensible man's heart there are few snares more dangerous than that of a woman's regard, manifested, not coarsely, but with that delicate flattery which feminine art can command. In such a case, particularly with the addition of beauty and attractiveness, a man stands in double peril, for not only his vanity but something far better is touched. And Miss Symonds was handsome, clever, and thoroughly skilled in all the various modes of fascination.

The world said it would be a match; Miss Julia said nothing, but, like the parrot, thought the more. As for the intended victim at the shrine of matrimony, he was not conscious of any definite conclusion or even desire upon the subject. He knew that with Julia's dark eyes upon him his pulse quickened somewhat, and that an evening spent with her was distinguished by a pleasant exhilaration. But John Graham was a lover of beauty in every form, and sometimes a strain of music had thrilled him with a more delicious power than the glances of any woman as yet possessed over him. He was still firm in his resolve to marry no one unsuited to him, and his youthful ideal was yet unforgotten. Personally Miss Symonds did not especially realize that fair dream; whether she did so in other respects John Graham had yet to discover. So far, he was not bound to her by the shadow of a link, but should she prove what she might prove—why, then Mr. Graham might go the way of all mankind.

Sincerely sorry as he was for his friend's death, time and travel—for he was then on the eve of a six-months' journey—to a great extent obliterated the impression. On his return he had to think about Miss Symonds, whom he found if possible handsomer than ever, and still unmarried. In wondering why she remained so, John found occasion to ask himself if he wished for such a wife, deciding finally that in one way or another the question should be set at rest before the end of the coming summer. Partly with this view he accepted her invitation to visit her sister's country-seat.

Annette Sawyer, her sister's senior by a number of years, had been a handsome, showy girl, whose matrimonial venture, according to the world's opinion, had been an eminent success. If some carping tongues whispered pretty loudly that she had married the rich Mr. Sawyer for his money, why,

jealousy is always ready to assert the same of any girl whose husband is the possessor of more wealth than youth. At all events, after some half-dozen years of wedded bliss, Mr. Sawyer had died, leaving his wife the happy owner of two children and a magnificent fortune. Mrs. Sawyer was fond of society, and, the proper period of sorrow having elapsed, permitted herself the pleasure of gathering her friends about her, presiding over the festivities in very becoming and extremely mitigated mourning. Being really a most accomplished hostess, a visit at her house was as agreeable as tact and hospitality could make it.

The two children, of the respective ages of five and eight, were as pretty and self-willed as might be expected. John at times used to wonder what sort of life their nursery-governess could lead, beneath their imperious and often contradictory sway. One day he chanced to encounter this unhappy person.

It was an uncomfortably warm morning, and Mr. Graham sat smoking and trying to read in an arbor on the coolest side of the house, when he was disturbed by an unusual clamor near by, in which children's voices were very prominent. As it was but a short time after his arrival, he had scarcely seen the youthful hopes of the house of Sawyer, and feeling some curiosity on the subject, he thought the present a good opportunity for its gratification. So he proceeded to make his appearance on the scene of action.

A glance discovered the children a little distance in the garden, with a third person, whom, at first sight, he took for another child, but who, raising herself at his approach, proved to be a young lady. He had gone too far for retreat, however; so, throwing away his cigarette, he joined the group, and found that his first estimate had, after all, been almost right. The girl was scarcely more than a child in appearance, and the disorder into which the children's rudeness had thrown her dress and hair caused her to seem yet younger than she really was.

"Well, little ones," said John, good-humoredly, as the children in momentary awe ceased their clamor, "what is the trouble now? Let me know, and perhaps I can help you."

With which the whirlwind burst forth again, with such violence that he could clearly distinguish only that some complaint was being made against their companion.

"But this young lady—your cousin, perhaps—" he began, looking at the drooping head.

"No, she isn't my cousin—she's only Belle," answered the eldest Mademoiselle Sawyer, with a toss of the head that spoke volumes.

"I take care of them," the subject of their conversation said, patiently, "but I can't carry Beauty, indeed; he's so heavy;" and, as she lifted her blue eyes appealingly, Mr. Graham thought her the most exquisite little creature he had ever beheld.

"Too heavy? I should think so, to be sure," he replied, removing the gaze under which her color was beginning to rise, to the "Beauty" under consideration, a woolly little animal, altogether too plump and frisky to form a pleasant burden on a hot summer day.

The children began noisily to explain how they were going to the piazza, and the dog wouldn't follow them, and cross Belle wouldn't carry him, though she knew how they wanted him; to which catalogue of her crimes "cross Belle" listened with a resignation which John was far from emulating, as he watched the droop of the slight form.

"Beauty is too heavy to lift," he said, to the infant tyrants, with a view to conciliation; "but I know a better way to make him follow. Now, Miss Belle, if you will give me those things you are holding, we will take up our march to the piazza."

And, despite, her remonstrances, taking from her arms the miscellaneous heap of cushions, clothes and toys with which they were weighted, he led the way to the house, artfully beguiling Beauty, the while, by means of a ~~care~~ waved bewilderingly a few inches in front of his nose, and from its very unattainableness, probably, seeming to his doggish fancy the one object worthy of pursuit.

This unlooked-for procession was encountered, suddenly, by Miss Julia Symonds, who, in her riding-habit, was proceeding to explore the garden for Mr. Graham. Her glance, graciously passing that gentleman, rested upon his girlish companion, whose thick-coiled hair the little dog, in his struggles, had loosened, leaving the long curls to fall, fair and flossy, over her shoulders.

Miss Symonds never permitted herself to indulge in anything so vulgar as scolding, but her voice upon occasion could take a tone that made the unhappy listener think a common scolding delicious in comparison. Such was the case in the present emergency.

"When you have amused yourself sufficiently," she observed, with cold, severe distinctness, transfixing the culprit with a look,

"perhaps you will retire to your room and arrange your hair in a proper manner. I shall take care that Mrs. Sawyer is informed of the example you set her children. Do you understand me, Miss Carver?"

The poor child, tears flooding her eyes, murmured some answer, while the children, in delight, began to shout that Miss Carver was gone, and Belle was the new one. Miss Symonds sent them on to the house, and turning her attention to John began to apologize for the trouble he had undergone, to which that gentleman listened with hardly concealed annoyance, answering as briefly as politeness would permit.

This little occurrence furnished Mr. Graham with food for thought. Something there had been in the tone, the look of Miss Julia, that rendered him doubtful of the alliance into which he felt himself drifting. Could it be possible that he was on the eve of such a mistake as that which had ruined his father's happiness? Then he recalled again the youthful ideal, grown somewhat dim and shadowy, of late, resolving, before finally committing himself, to watch more warily. With a nature formed for domestic ties, his thirty-seventh year found him leading a lonely life, but though youth and manhood might slip away in the waiting, he was determined never to blast his whole future by one false step; or to enthrone a false deity in the heart so long held ready for a true one.

A good deal to his regret, he saw nothing more of the little governess. Occasionally he would catch a glimpse of her, sitting with her charges across his path, but she so evidently avoided him that he had not the heart to pursue her.

One day, on the lawn, some of the gentlemen were rallying him on his confirmed bachelorhood, and at last the often-urged question was asked:

"Really, Graham, I wonder why you don't marry?"

John laughed, and his eyes wandered to Belle, who was watching the children a little way off.

"I am waiting for my promised wife," he answered.

"To be sure you are?" queried one, in surprise. "Who is she? where is she?"

"She is a young lady who used to sit on my knee and offer to marry me. As for the last question, I wish I knew, myself."

"This is highly romantic," observed another. "When did you see her last?"

"About ten years ago," replied Mr. Graham, with a smile. "Not to make too great a mystery of it, the young lady had reached the venerable age of six years, at the time of our parting."

"You will hardly know her when she makes her appearance again."

"That does not follow," said John, laughing. "She was my ideal, you know, and, as such, deeply impressed on my remembrance. I have a very good idea of the sort of young lady she would be likely to make."

And again his glance turned toward the little nursery-governess, who, from the first, had somehow reminded him of the six-year-old Christie, his friend Charles Woodburne's daughter.

Two persons had observed these wandering looks, one of whom was Belle herself. At a little distance from the party, she was still near enough to hear and see all that passed. She listened eagerly to what was said, and, when John's eyes rested on her, colored a sudden vivid scarlet, and turned hastily away.

The other marker of Mr. Graham's proceedings was one not less interested; Miss Julia Symonds, in fact. She looked and listened, making a mental note, the effect of which was afterward apparent.

As for John himself, he mused more than he would have cared to confess upon the probable cause of the girl's quick color, settling it, finally, in his own mind, as the result of a sensitiveness to notice from strangers, common with girls of her age.

A few days later, as he was walking along one of the terrace paths, there was a flutter behind him, and, as he turned around, a soft voice said:

"Mr. Graham, please—"

There, on the bank just beneath him was little Belle, her shy eyes uplifted to him, and her sweet face serious with some weighty purpose. There was a look, too, of recent tears, which touched John's kindly heart in a moment.

Swinging himself down beside her, he took her hand.

"Is there anything I can do for you, my child?" he asked, tenderly. "Do not hesitate to tell me."

"Nothing, only—only I am going away to-morrow, and want to say good-by—and—and Mr. Graham—please take this."

"This" being a small paper which she pressed into his hand, turning the next

instant to go. But John detained her.

"One moment, Miss Belle. Did you say you were going away from here?"

"Yes sir, to-morrow." She dropped her lids to hide the tears that would well up afresh under the brown lashes.

"Will you forgive me for asking the reason?" he ventured next.

At this her face lightened with almost a gleam of fun, as she answered, promptly:

"I would rather not tell you, if you please."

"I suppose, then, it would be of no use to offer my services in the case?"

"No sir, thank you," answered the little puzzle, quite demurely. Mr. Graham looked at her a moment, then unfolded the paper which she had given him. It contained a diamond ring.

He was now completely bewildered. What should a little nursery-governess do with a diamond ring at all, and why had she presented it to him? On this latter point he proceeded to question her.

"Did you mean to give this to me?" he asked.

"Yes sir, if you please," she answered, without looking at him.

"But I really cannot accept it. Have you any idea of its value?"

"O yes, it was my mother's ring," she said, in a tremulous voice. "She told me to keep it as long as I could, but I knew she would like me to give it to you."

"My dear child," said John, greatly touched, "you must allow me to return the ring, and thank you for the kindness of the intention, which I shall remember as long as I live. I wish I had done anything to deserve it."

He had come to the conclusion that the child's grateful heart had prompted her to make such a return for the trifling service he had rendered her on their first meeting.

"But you *must* keep it," she insisted, eagerly. "I am sure mamma would wish you to have it, and so do I, now that—"

"Now that what?" questioned John, as she hesitated and colored.

"Now that you may need it." Then, the sudden shyness gone, she continued earnestly, "O Mr. Graham, I know all about it—Miss Julia told me how you were going to lose your money—and this ring is a valuable one, I heard papa say, so it may help you a little—and you used to be so kind to me—"

"Used to be so kind to you?" said John, in amazement, interrupting her hurried speech. "Why, my dear little girl, who are

you, then, and where have you ever seen me before a month ago?"

At this question her eyes fell, and the blood flamed up in her cheeks again, as vividly as on that day when John had looked at her on the lawn.

"It cannot be possible," said that gentleman, slowly, as if struggling with a gigantic doubt, "that you are little Christie Woodburne who used to sit on my knee, so long ago? My dear child, why have you never told me of this, before?"

Then followed a series of explanations. Poor Christie, left all alone in the world, had gone from California with a Northern family returning home. Then she had passed into the employ of Mrs. Sawyer, who was pleased to secure so cheaply, a nursery-governess who could speak French, an accomplishment which poor Christie had acquired during her father's prosperous days. She had not been a great while in her service before the coming of Mr. Graham, whose name had long been a household word with her, and whom she speedily recognized. While she was summoning courage to tell him who she was, there occurred that conversation on the lawn, which made her ashamed to speak, and then Miss Julia had been angry, and persuaded Mrs. Sawyer to send away the nursery-governess, reproaching her scornfully with a desire to attract Mr. Graham's notice, and telling her that it was hardly worth her while now, as he was about to lose his fortune.

These particulars John drew from the girl, not without considerable difficulty, and by dint of persistent cross-questioning. At length, however, he arrived at a tolerably clear comprehension of the case.

"But your name?" he said, finally. "You reminded me of my little Christie more than once, but as I never heard your last name, the 'Belle' deceived me completely."

"My name was Christabel," she answered.

"Christie was what they always called me at home, and I could not bear to hear it from strangers. So I gave them the last part of my name."

While they were talking, Miss Symonds came suddenly on them. The girl started, but John Graham detained her. He never made "a scene," but he liked a thing perfectly understood, so now he spoke, very quietly, before the astonished lady had quite collected herself.

"Miss Julia, I understand that Mrs. Sawyer has no further occasion for this child's services. Perhaps you would be so kind as to mention to her, what I think she has a right to know, that Miss Christabel Woodburne is the daughter of one of my oldest and most valued friends, and that any recommendation which Mrs. Sawyer might have been good enough to think of giving her will be quite unnecessary, as I intend to take charge of the young lady and her education myself."

This telling speech was delivered at once so coolly and so politely that the lady could find nothing to say in reply; so, leaving her to recover, as best she might, from the first shock of amazement, Mr. Graham lifted his hat, and walked away with Christie.

He was as good as his word in assuming the care of Christie and her education, which latter is nearly completed. Meantime he is anxiously looking forward to her twentieth birthday, when it is expected that a certain event will take place.

Twenty years' difference counts for something in married life, yet if the parties themselves are satisfied, the rest of the world should be content. That this is the case in the present instance seems probable, as "Belle" in return for her offered gift, doubtless, now wears upon her forefinger a diamond ring presented to her by Mr. Graham, who intends to add a plain gold circlet, when Christie fulfils her childish promise.



JOHN ANSTRUTHERS'S FORTUNE.

The Remarkable and True Story of an Old Counsellor.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE FORTUNE.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago—said the old lawyer—I was practising in the city, where I had been established about ten years. I flatter myself that I was always industrious and faithful in the law, if not brilliant, and hence I was successful. I did a safe, profitable, real estate business, with sometimes a litigated case; worked steadily day-times, passed the evening usually at home with my wife (as every married man ought), enjoyed life, and throve to my satisfaction. When the affair happened that I am about to speak of, I had no partner, and occupied rooms in the Star Block. I had a student, Will Reeves by name; a young man who has much to do with the story, and so he may as well be noticed particularly here as elsewhere. He had been studying with me about three years, at this time, and had succeeded in thoroughly convincing me of one fact—that he was never intended for a lawyer. He was a hearty, happy fellow of two and twenty, as poor as a church mouse, and as happy as a king; a bright-eyed, red-cheeked young man, so full of health and animal spirits that he could not bear to be in the office more than four hours a day, nor more than half an hour at a stretch, at that. He had a fist like a blacksmith's sledge, and was as strong as a young Hercules, and so sunny and good-natured in his temperament that I never had the heart to find fault with him, although he used to vex me sometimes by his irregularities. But I made him of great use in collecting for me; he could get money when I had long given it up in despair; and, on the whole, I was glad enough to have him with me, while realizing, as I said before, that he hadn't in him the stuff that lawyers are made of.

He came running in one afternoon just before tea-time, and said:

"I forgot to tell you, Mr. Armsly, that John Anstruthers wants to call this evening and consult you. He is a drayman, and can't leave his business in the day time. His daughter found an old paper, or something, in an old trunk, and thinks it may be worth

something to them, in some way. She wanted to show it to me, but I told her she'd better bring it to you. Shall I tell them to come to-night, sir?"

I was a good deal more than half-angry at my inconsiderate student for making an engagement for me which I saw would deprive Mrs. Armsly of the pleasure of my company that evening; but I remembered that the party he mentioned could not visit me in the day time, and I repressed my vexation.

"These are friends of yours, I presume, Will?"

He blushed and stammered, and got dreadfully embarrassed over that simple question, and finally admitted that he was acquainted with them, and would take it as a favor to him if I would see them that night.

"Well, I suppose I must," I said, resignedly. And Will was half-way down the stairs before I had my gloves on.

I returned to the office after tea, according to promise, and had not been sitting behind my table more than ten minutes when my visitors came. I became aware, by the confused murmur of voices at the foot of the stairs that preceded their entrance, that Mr. Will Reeves had accompanied them, and divers stampings on the pavement and whistlings of snatches of popular tunes from the same quarter during the half hour's interview that followed, informed me that the same disinterested party was impatiently awaiting its conclusion. My visitors were, of course, John Anstruthers and his daughter Molly; the first an honest, simple-minded man, hard-handed from daily toil, but with a great, generous heart, which would have done humanity volumes of good, if it had been put in the breast of a king; and which did do immense good, after—but I am getting ahead of my story. Molly Anstruthers was a very pretty girl of twenty, bright and intelligent, and with a beautiful affection for her father, who repaid her with all the devotion of his nature. These two were alone together in the world; the drayman's wife had died shortly after Molly was born, and she was the only survivor of six children. They sat down together on the settee, and the girl produced

a folded paper from under her shawl, and presented it to me.

"We are sorry to trouble you, sir, but father can only leave at night, and I thought you'd like to ask him something about this. I don't know, but it seems likely to me that this paper gives him something. Please look at it."

"It's all Molly's notion, sir," broke in the drayman, half-apologetically. "I didn't want to come, but she would have me; and the child has everything her own way." He took her hand between his own rough palms as he spoke, and caressed it as he continued, "Lord love me, sir, what should it be but an old letter, or somewhat like that? I can't read without my glasses, and never half-looked at it since the day I first saw it, which was—"

John seemed loquacious enough, at all events, and, as I had seen enough in the paper at first sight to startle me, and to make a moment's quiet thought needful, I bade him be silent till I had finished examining it.

It was an old document, written with ink which was somewhat faded though perfectly legible. It had been folded out of shape, and so badly creased that my first care was to spread it out on my table and smooth it with my hand; and while doing so, the name written opposite the seal—Remsen Pollard—attracted my attention. It was written in the nervous, crabbed characters which were so familiar to me as the genuine signature of the man, and I began at the beginning and read the paper carefully through. Astounded beyond measure at the contents of it, I hastily referred to the city maps which hung on the wall before me; returned to my table, read the paper through again, compared the signature with several on other papers which I took from pigeon-holes, and finally exclaimed:

"Now, in the name of all the wonders, where did you get this?"

"Well, as I was going to tell you," continued John, unaffected by my excitement, "I should think it was about nineteen years ago, shortly after Molly here was born and wife died, that old Remsen Pollard came over to our house one evening. I came to the door, and was about as surprised to see him as if the king of England had stood there. 'Where's John Anstruthers?' says he. 'That's me,' says I. 'Pooh, pooh!' says he, rapping his cane on the walk; 'I mean old John who used to dray for me.' This was about three years before father died, I should

think, and he was all but laid up with the rheumatism. So I took old Pollard into his room, wondering all the time what that rich old aristocrat could want with him; and father was about as surprised as I was. However, Mr. Pollard sat down and chatted quite pleasantly for a while, asking about father's rheumatism, and telling him what helped his own. Finally he rapped the floor with his cane—that was a favorite habit with him, you know—and said:

"I'll tell you what I came here for, John Anstruthers; it was to do you an act of simple justice. Men call me miserly and stingy, I believe; but I know how to be just, and to keep my own from those that don't deserve it.' And his little black eyes twinkled as he spoke. 'You, John, always served me well while you could work, as you very well know. I don't believe there were any three men together who helped me so much to get my money as you did, and just because you were always ready to serve me, in rain or shine, day or night. Now, John, I know perfectly well that I never paid you over and above well for your work; so here's a trifle to balance the account.'

"With that he threw out—what do you think? Just five dollars, as I'm alive! Such a trifle, after all this magnificent talk, was what I couldn't understand at all, especially as what the old man said was perfectly true. He had been a pretty hard employer, and father had done a great deal of work for him for a very little money. Poor father looked at him doubtfully, at first, as if he thought he was trying to make game of him, and then said, simply, 'Thank ye kindly, sir,' and never offered to touch the bill that lay on the quilt.

"'Maybe that wont quite make up what you ought to have,' old Remsen went on. 'Well, well, take this.' And he threw this paper after the bill. 'Maybe it'll do you some good sometime—who knows? Better not do anything with it till I'm gone, though; then it may help you, if I don't live too long.' And the old man grinned, and shuffled out of the room without waiting to hear anything more from us."

"And you never examined it?" I said.

"Well, no. Father was provoked so at the old man that he told me to put away the paper in his old trunk, and some time he would light his pipe with it. 'He's a mean old curmudgeon,' he said, 'who wants to get up a name for generosity in his last years—which the Lord knows he's never had in his

life. If he wants me to help him about it, he'll have to make up for his past meanness at a bigger figure than all this. Five dollars, indeed! There's no conscience here; it's all selfishness, and an old sinner's desire for a good name. As for his paper—I won't look at it. It's probably a share in some broken-down bank, or something of no more value. Throw it into my old trunk, John, and it'll light my pipe by-and-by."

"Father never did light his pipe with it; but I suspect that was because he forgot all about it. He never said another word about it; and after his death I thought no more of it till yesterday, when Molly came across it. Do you make anything of it, sir?"

"I should rather think I did," I replied. And then I explained to him the precise effect of this paper, while his honest gray eyes almost started out of his head with astonishment, and Molly clapped her hands and actually cried with delight.

"Just tell me that again, sir," said John, his voice shaking so that he could hardly articulate a word. I repeated what I had just said; and then John heaved a great sigh and looked with proud tenderness at his daughter.

"The Lord love us, Molly," he said, "who'd have thought such a thing of old Remsen Pollard? I'm so glad, my dear; not so much for myself, as for you and—"

"Now don't, father," interrupted Molly, casting an alarmed look at me. And the father stopped before betraying Molly's secret, which I thought I had already guessed.

CHAPTER II.

HUNG IN THE BALANCE.

AFTER this I talked freely with both father and daughter for half an hour; but I could see that their hearts were too full for much more speech, and I appointed another meeting for further arrangements. When they had gone I remained in the office, shrewdly suspecting that I should not have to tarry long for another visitor; and so it was. Before the expiration of another half hour there was a quick, familiar step on the stairs, and Master Will Reeves burst into the room, overrunning with excitement.

"Is this really so, Mr. Armsly?" he asked. "Have the Anstruthers really got a fortune?" "And supposing they have, my dear boy," I said, blandly, "how will that affect you?"

He blushed like a girl, and stumbled

through a dozen disconnected words to find an answer, before I broke the ice and came to his relief.

"Come, Will," I said, "be honest, and tell me the truth. You ought to have told me everything at first. How is it—what are the Anstruthers to you?"

"Everything!" he responded, emphatically, and slapped his cap down on the table. "Of course I ought to tell you, Mr. Armsly, for you are my best friend. Maybe if I'd told you sooner, it would have been better; but, however, here goes now for no concealments. Molly Anstruthers and I love each other dearly, and have been engaged two years. We meant to be married sometime; that's all I have been trying to be a lawyer for, so I might get enough together to have her. Now she tells me that she's to be very rich, and the dear, good girl is quite as glad on my account as on her own. Is it so?"

"Well, Will, now that you have made me understand that you have a right to know, I will let you into the secret. I suppose you never expected to marry one of the richest girls in the city, Master Will?"

"Far from it, sir."

"Will, if you keep your present footing with Miss Molly three months longer, there is a very good chance that you can marry the heiress of not less than two hundred thousand."

Will Reeves was a very sensitive boy; but he took the announcement far more quietly than I could have expected. He grew a little weak in the knees, sat down and looked into my face in a puzzled way, and then bent his face out of sight. His eyes were a little misty when he looked up, and he simply said:

"I am very glad for Molly. I only wish I was worthier of her. Now please tell me all about it, Mr. Armsly."

I am an old lawyer, and used to all phases of character, and all kinds of exhibitions of human nature, and generally look coolly enough at all of them; but in this case I had to pause an instant to admire the faithful devotion of this girl to Will—a devotion that this sudden and enormous prosperity could not shake any more than had the hard lot in which they had hopelessly kept their affection bright for years.

As I put Will Reeves in possession of the secret of old Remsen Pollard's paper, the needs of my story now demand that the reader should also be a participant.

This paper, as I had discovered, to my un-

bounded amazement, was a clear and legal deed to John Anstruthers, senior, of all the west half of lot thirty-seven, on the north side of Front street. And though the description did not say so, lot thirty-seven, west half, was the lot upon which stood the entire Star Block—the same in which I had my office—and the very finest property on the street. It had a front of an hundred feet, with the best stores in the city on the first floor; an abundance of office-room, in continual demand, on the second and third; and one of the first public halls in the city on the fourth. The whole property was worth not a cent less than two hundred thousand dollars, as I had stated to Will; and that was such a figure, you will please bear in mind, twenty-five years ago, as a million is to-day. The prospect of it was enough to put even me in a flutter, to say nothing of those whom it more intimately concerned. The deed was in all respects formal and correct, absolutely releasing the whole property to John Anstruthers, in consideration of his many life-long services, for which he had been poorly paid; the signature was, as I perfectly knew, the genuine writing of Remsen Pollard; and the deed was properly acknowledged by him, and bore the notarial certificate. It had not been registered, but that could be done immediately. And as twenty years had not elapsed since the deed was given, the present John Anstruthers, as heir to his father, was entitled to immediate possession, and could doubtless enforce it. In fact, I had advised him that if his rights under the instrument were not promptly recognized, he must begin an action of ejectment forthwith for the possession of what was undoubtedly his.

But it will naturally be asked, as Will asked of me—What could have been the motive of old Mr. Pollard in making so strange and unusual a disposition of his property? and who was at present in possession?

These questions can be best answered together; the answers easily suggested themselves to me, from my knowledge of Remsen Pollard twenty years before his death. He was a close, hard, avaricious man, sordid and miserly, but full of eccentricities, with which he astonished the city during his whole life. After steadily refusing to give a mere pittance for the most worthy charities, year after year, he would sometimes give lavishly for a year, and then as suddenly discontinue. He would patch up a poor old shell of a house from year to year, expending in a few months more

money on it than it was worth, for the sake of keeping it tenanted, and at the same time let an elegant dwelling run to waste, putting the rent so high that nobody could live in it. He was subject to all kinds of freaks and fancies, and was exactly the man to do the queer thing that it appeared he had done with the Star Block. And his eccentricities were so well known the city through, that I was well satisfied that the complexion of insanity could not be successfully put upon this. It was a fair, just and perfectly lawful transaction; and I decided upon the spot that the case was almost a certainty for Anstruthers. If you ask me why it was not quite a certainty, I answer that in law nothing is *quite* certain. But it was morally certain; so sure that I exulted a little, in a quiet way, over the agitation I should cause in financial and business circles upon the announcement, when I should be ready to make it.

But why did not Mr. Pollard leave this property to his heir?

His words to old Mr. Anstruthers in giving him the deed will partially answer that question: "I know how to be just, and to keep my own from those that don't deserve it." The old man left, at his decease, a single child, Adam Pollard, a man of about forty years of age, and no favorite with his father, as was generally well known. As a young man, he had been wild and dissolute, and in his mature years he had exhibited little or no improvement. He was widely known as a gamester, and his spendthrift life, since coming into possession of his estate, had dissipated the whole of it, save the Star Block, the rents of which he was understood to invest punctually at the gaming-table every month. More than one fierce quarrel between father and son were known, and, upon the death of the former, it was confidently expected that it would be found that Adam was disinherited, and the whole immense property disposed of according to some freak of the old man's eccentric brain. On the contrary, no will of any kind was found, and Adam Pollard quietly took possession of the whole, as sole heir. There were many who professed to think that the old man left a will, and that the son had destroyed it, finding nothing in it to his advantage; but nothing of this kind was ever established. I had myself believed it, until this evening; but the surprising discovery of the deed to John Anstruthers caused me to change my opinion. It was clear to me now that he intended to give his

most permanent and valuable property to the poor drayman, leaving the balance to his son. And anybody who ever knew Remsen Pollard would have no difficulty in saying that this whole transaction was eminently characteristic of him, and no more remarkable than a dozen queer things he had done in his lifetime.

Now, before I proceed with the story, I want to refer again to my own carelessness, for which I can hardly account. The deed, as I have said, was unregistered; and so long as it was so, John Anstruthers was in continual danger of losing everything which it gave him by its destruction, and possibly by other means which I will not attempt to describe, as a particular statement of them would involve too close an examination of the law to be interesting. The short of it is, it was my duty to have that deed registered, and so perpetuated, the very first thing on the following morning; and this I failed to do for three months, depending upon a false security all the time. It was a piece of almost criminal folly in me, which you may be sure I never repeated afterward; and I verily believe that the fright which I suffered when the probable consequences of my neglect stared me in the face, put more than half the gray hairs in my head which you see there now. But I must not anticipate. I am coming to that in due time.

In the morning I had a brief interview with John Anstruthers, and then wrote a brief note to Adam Pollard. It told the story as I have told it, to this point, in a few explicit words, and proposed a fair settlement. While asserting that Mr. Pollard's legal rights to the property were nothing at all, it declared the entire willingness of Mr. Anstruthers to pay a reasonable bonus for an immediate and peaceable relinquishment of the possession to him; and proposed the payment to him of the rents for the ensuing six months, on those conditions. And it requested that a reply should be addressed to Edwin Armsly, No. 27, Third Floor, Star Block.

The answer came the following day. It was from Messrs. Bray and Black, attorneys, on behalf of Mr. Pollard; and I heartily wish I had preserved a copy of it, that you might enjoy it with me, as the coolest piece of legal assurance imaginable. It treated with contemptuous silence my claim on behalf of Anstruthers; wished me to understand that Mr. Pollard was not in the least frightened by threatening letters, although he had it yet

under consideration whether to take no further notice of mine, or to institute a prosecution for conspiracy; and finally expressed the surprise of the writer that I, who bore the reputation of an honorable and legitimate attorney, should be caught in a disreputable attempt at black-mailing. I put the letter away with a smile, and in less than an hour Adam Pollard was served with the papers to commence an ejectment suit, with John Anstruthers as plaintiff.

The answer which came in a week denied the making of any deed by Remsen Pollard, and its delivery to the plaintiff; and, upon this issue, I prepared the case for trial. I retained Mr. Wendover, the most eminent advocate at our bar, and, after a very careful review of the case, he pronounced our success certain. "The deed cannot possibly be invalidated," he said. "I shall go into court with the most perfect confidence in the result." All of which, of course, I communicated to the Anstruthers and Will Reeves, and in a very pleasant frame of mind as to the final result of this extraordinary suit, I awaited the September circuit, now only a few weeks removed.

In the meantime, the affair had made a most profound sensation in the city; receiving long notices from the press, and creating the most lively curiosity among the people at large. I was informed from a reliable quarter that both Adam Pollard and his counsel were ill at ease; that they had lost the confident and contemptuous air with which they at first referred to the suit, and that they held long and frequent consultations over the matter. And I was also told that Pollard had discovered certain memoranda among his father's papers which showed the intention of the elder Pollard to do what he had done with the Star Block. No direct developments, however, had been made by the other side; but I was hardly prepared to think that the case would be allowed to go to trial. I anticipated an appeal on behalf of Pollard to be allowed to accept the terms of our offer made before the suit was brought. I did not receive it. I think I did not quite understand the desperate character of the gamester who was now preparing to risk everything on a single bold throw.

During the several weeks which elapsed after the beginning of the suit, before the denouement, I was called upon to visit John and his daughter several times; and I had so interested my wife with my accounts of the

case and the parties, that she insisted on seeing Molly. She was greatly charmed with the girl's simple, unaffected ways, and quite as much by Will Reeves's pride and devotion to her. "They are a delightful couple," she said, "and I'm glad enough of their good fortune." "Nonsense!" I replied; "you are not silly enough to think that, after John Anstruthers comes into possession of his property, that girl will tolerate Will any more?" "I am simple enough to think just that," the little woman indignantly responded; "and, what's more, I'm simple enough to think you a great brute for doubting her a particle!"

There was no further argument between us two, of course; but I was more than half-inclined to doubt Molly's fidelity to the end. Not that I ever saw anything in her that seemed in the least like giving up Will; but I had a notion (and the ladies must forgive me if I am wrong), that women generally acted in that kind of way. I did Molly Anstruthers injustice by the suspicion; she was true as steel from first to last, and never showed a sign of receding from her vows to Will. She married him just after the result of the suit, as I am about to record it, and is now his faithful and dearly-beloved wife. Perhaps my story would be a little more dramatic if I should insert something of that kind; but the simple truth forbids. She married Will because she loved him, and would have done so had she been heiress of the Indies. Nevertheless, those who like the dramatic may very likely find it as the story closes.

The September circuit was rapidly approaching; only a few days intervened. Every preparation had been made on my side, and I had dismissed the subject from my mind, so far as its immense importance would allow. I was sitting alone in my office one afternoon—the Saturday which preceded the Monday of court. I was writing very busily at my table; so much so that I did not note the entrance of a stranger who came in and stood by me, waiting for me to look up. When I did look up and discover him, I was startled by the suddenness of his appearance, and rose hastily from my seat.

"You didn't observe my entrance," he said, smiling; "but that was because you were so much engaged with your work. I wish to see you on particular business. Can you favor me now?"

I replied in the affirmative, and asked him to be seated. While he sat down, removed

his hat and cleared his throat, preparatory to speaking, I looked pretty closely at him, as lawyers generally do at people who want to see them on very particular business. Just one look was enough to tell me that his was one of those faces from which you can make nothing at all. There are some few people who have the rare faculty of divesting their faces of every sign of expression and emotion, and this was one of them. I can say no more about him than that he was a slight-built, wiry man, with quick, nervous motions, a cold blue eye, and a hard, muscular face.

"I am come to see you about the case of Anstruthers against Pollard," he said, abruptly. "My name is Curtiss Gwin. You may have heard of me?"

"Mr. Gwin, the distinguished advocate of the metropolis?" I asked.

He bowed. I had indeed heard of him; but this was my first intimation that he was retained by Mr. Pollard.

"I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, sir," I said; "but I am happy to do so now. Do I understand you that you are retained by Mr. Pollard in this suit?"

"Yes," he replied. "I came from New York yesterday, in answer to his telegram, and I believe he expects me to manage his case in court; but I must first discover that he has a defence. I tell you frankly, sir, as a fair advocate, that I am here for that purpose. If I can discover from you that my client has no defence—and I am half-inclined to think that is the case—I shall take pleasure in advising him to settle, upon the basis of the offer you made him some weeks ago, if you are inclined to repeat it. Such, frankly, is my present object."

"I will be happy to satisfy you that your client has no defence," I replied.

"Very well; now to the proof. I learn from the papers in the suit that the plaintiff claims this property by virtue of a deed from the father of the present possessor?"

"A deed," I said, "properly executed and acknowledged, formal in all its parts, and perfectly good, in every respect. I regard it as entirely conclusive."

"Will you allow me to see it?"

I reflected an instant, and then rose and started for the safe. I suppose a great many of my readers will tell me that it was the height of imprudence to show this instrument in this way, and perhaps it was; but it did not seem so to me then. Between two lawyers, meeting for the purpose that had

brought us together, nothing could seem more reasonable, and I did not hesitate a minute before deciding to comply with his request. I opened the outer door of the safe, as well as that of the inner fire-chamber, and produced the deed from the envelop where I had carefully kept it. Mr. Gwin took it from my hand, and, beginning at the top, read it carefully through, and then closely examined the signature. Next, he turned it over and looked at the back of it; and then his eyes wandered over the paper with a sudden wistful, eager expression that alarmed me, and I stretched out my hand and snatched it from him. I repented the act the next instant; he looked up with such a look of surprise and insulted dignity, that I begged his pardon on the spot.

"I don't know what manner of lawyers you have been dealing with," he said, in a scornful way that cut me to the quick; "but it seems hardly necessary for me to assure you that I should not attempt to steal your deed with three policemen between me and the street, even if I were base enough to imagine such a thing."

"I beg pardon, Mr. Gwin! I was too hasty."

"Well, it's of no consequence; let it pass. As to the effect of this deed, there can, of course, be but one legal opinion. Adam Pollard has no more title to this property than you or I, and I shall advise him to make the best terms he can with you. Is he to consider your offer as still open?"

"I will consult with my client, and advise you to-night," I replied.

"I will meet you here at ten o'clock, if convenient to you," he said, consulting an elegant gold watch. "That hour is somewhat late, but Mr. Pollard's attorneys are out of the city, and will not return till nine. I must, of course, consult with them before finally striking our colors. Will you see me here at ten?"

I thought of my wife, and of her fears about me whenever I was absent from home at night; but the prospect of getting this great suit finally settled, and securing the Anstruthers in their rights was of the first moment; and I gave him my promise to do as he wished. He followed me to the safe as I replaced the deed under double lock, and said:

"In the meantime, Mr. Armsly, if you can say a favorable word to your client to procure a good settlement for Pollard, please do so. I shall probably come to-night, throwing myself on your mercy."

He bade me good-afternoon, and walked to the door. As he turned the handle, he stopped and looked around.

"I think it will be better, Mr. Armsly, if our interview this evening is strictly private. Bitter feelings, of course, have been engendered between the parties to this suit, and I know my client does not wish to meet yours. We will reduce the terms of our settlement to writing to-night, and have the agreement signed by both of them Monday morning. Shall it be so?"

I assented, and he went away. I went also in half an hour.

From six till nine the office was closed; at nine I was back again, waiting for Mr. Gwin. I had seen John Anstruthers, and he had readily consented to let Pollard have the rents of the block for the next six months. "I don't feel that I am indebted to him a copper; but if he'll give up quietly, Monday morning, without a trial and any more trouble, I'll do that for him," he said.

The clock in the cosy little sitting-room at John's pointed to half-past eight before I left his house. Molly was sitting by the window, pretending to read; but, as I stole up quietly behind her, I saw that the book was upside down, and that the girl's pretty face was overcast by a rather serious look.

"Nothing the matter to-night, I hope, Molly?" I asked.

She started and blushed, and, as if to prevent any further questions, gave me a simple "no sir," and applied herself closely to her inverted book.

John lighted me past the hall.

"I hope nothing's amiss with the lad to-night," he said, closing the sitting-room door. "He's generally here by seven, and it's now half-past eight, and I know Molly expected him."

Promising to hasten Master Reeves's steps, if I should meet him, I walked directly to the office. The street was perfectly quiet in front of the block, save an occasional passer; the stores were lighted, but business had slackened an hour before, as was usual in our city on Saturday night. I ascended the first and second stairways, and walked along the passage, which on this evening was not lighted at all, and, entering my office, lit a single gas-jet, and sat down to await my visitor. He entered in a few moments.

My feelings, as may be imagined, were very satisfactory to myself during the few moments that I waited. I was about to terminate a suit, the most important I had ever been connected with, in the most successful manner, and reasonably expected a larger fee than had ever yet been paid me, three times over. It is perfectly natural for any man to feel proud of his success, particularly if it is a magnificent one, as was this, and I certainly indulged in feelings of self-congratulation as I sat there. I had no apprehension of anything amiss. I should have pronounced the man an idiot who could predict what was to happen in that room within the next ten minutes. So perfectly powerless are we to foretell and to avert danger, and so entirely are we at the mercy of what we cannot guard against! The terrible affair in which I now became an actor, and out of which I escaped with safety to myself and the interests of the Anstruthers by an agency which I cannot think was short of providential, made an impression upon me which I shall never lose this side the grave. Not more than ten minutes were consumed by this startling episode; but I verily believe that in those ten minutes were compressed more agony of mind, more acute mental suffering for me, than I have known in all the balance of my life.

Mr. Gwin entered, closing the door after him, and stepped forward to the table.

"We are alone, I suppose?" he asked.

When I said yes, he drew a folded paper from his pocket, and laid it on the table before me. "I find a difficulty in the way of settlement," he said. "Please read that."

I bent my face forward to examine the writing, and my neck was instantly grasped and compressed by two muscular hands. Surprise first, then terror, with a terrible surmise of the truth, flashed upon me. I strove to shout, but that iron grasp suffocated me to silence; I strove to rise, but my body was bent forcibly down to the table by an irresistible strength. I heard the door open and shut, and the sound of feet coming into the office; then a gag was forced into my mouth and secured, my arms were pinioned behind my back, and I was placed on a chair, while a burly ruffian held a cocked pistol to my head. And all this had been accomplished without noise of any kind, so entirely had I been taken by surprise.

"I'll trouble you for your keys, my dear sir," said Mr. Gwin, with a chuckle. "Ah, I forgot! you can't get at them. Let me help myself!"

He put his hand in my pocket, while I sat in enforced silence, and drew out my bunch of keys. Selecting the safe combination from the ring, he went to the safe with it.

Great Heaven! how can I hope to describe the horror that seized me, as a swift thought of the consequences of this night's work flashed upon me? The object of these ruffians was, of course, to seize upon the Anstruthers deed, to destroy it, and then make their escape, leaving no trace of their work. The deed was still unregistered, thanks to my wretched procrastination; when it was destroyed, no written trace or note of it would be left, and not a person had seen it, save those directly interested in establishing it. The safe-lock had not yielded to the fingers of the scoundrel who manipulated it before I had considered the probable consequences of the loss of this deed. It would deprive us at once of the very proof of our title, and ridicule without end would be cast upon our assertion that it had been taken from us by force. The defence would turn it to account as an evidence of conspiracy; the story would be too improbable for belief. The jury would be asked to believe, and probably would believe, that no such deed as we would testify of had ever been executed; and the loss of the case would ruin the character of every one connected with it for the plaintiff. It would even be said that I caused myself to be gagged and tied in my office for the purpose of corroborating my absurd story; the defence would boldly deny all knowledge of or connection with the alleged robbery, and denounce it as part and parcel of a shameless conspiracy to swindle Adam Pollard out of his property. The result could not be otherwise than against us; absolute ruin for all of us was the price of my folly.

Such were my heart-sickening thoughts as I sat gagged and bound, with the cold muzzle of a pistol within three inches of my forehead, and looked in hopeless terror upon the man who had so craftily planned and audaciously executed this desperate plot. I saw him open both the outer and inner safes, hastily take out the deed, look at it, and place it in his breast-pocket.

"Come on, Jake!" he said, exultantly. "Leave that fool alone there now. I've got it. Come on!"

He came back to the table to turn off the gas, and then I heard their steps going towards the door. Out of the room and down the stairs they went, my heart sinking lower and lower in the depths of despair as I heard their footfalls retreating further and further from me, and realized with bitter anguish of spirit that all was lost—honor, fortune, hope, everything! May I be forever spared the agony which even a tithe of my emotions in that dreadful moment would give me!

A shout suddenly came from the hall below—a cry of rage—a pistol shot—another and still another, in quick succession—the sound of a brief scuffle, intermingled with cries of pain, and then the sound of feet in flight and pursuit along the hall and down the first flight of stairs. It was all over in two minutes; and, while I held my breath in painful suspense, I heard a quick and well-known step on the stairs, and Will Reeves burst into the room, followed by a policeman with a bull's-eye lantern. The dear boy's arm was bleeding from a wound, but he did not seem to mind it at all; his eye took in the whole meaning of the scene at a glance, and he hastened to cut me loose with his pocket-knife, and to release my organs of speech from the horrible gag.

"You're safe, sir, thank God!" he said, when he had satisfied himself that I had received no injury beyond my rough handling. "It is more than I expected."

"But the deed, Will—the deed! the deed! Don't tell me they have escaped with it!" And my brain whirled again at the thought.

"I should lie if I did," said Will, coolly, producing it and holding it up to me.

I shuddered as I saw a small, round hole through it, and a bloody stain upon it. "I took it out of his pocket after he tumbled over. The policeman's shot hit him full in the breast, and, if he isn't dead, he will be, sure, in five minutes."

The revulsion of feeling was almost too great to be borne. I threw my arms around Will and hugged him as if he had been a woman (my wife, I mean), and then became so weak that I had to lean on him for support.

A crowd had by this time gathered in the hall below, and closing the door, with the precious deed securely inside, and locking up the office, we went down to them. The man whom the policeman had shot—the Mr. Curtis Gwin of my story—was stone dead; the other had escaped with the mark of a locust

club across his forehead, though hotly pursued. I may as well state here that he escaped entirely, and that the clever rascal who had been shot dead in his crime had assumed, for this occasion, the name and character of a distinguished advocate who was then five hundred miles away. The purposes of the bold attempt which cost him his life will be perfectly apparent; and it will be at once suggested to the reader's mind that his visit of that afternoon was intended to insure my presence at the office that night, when the robbery could be tried with a better chance of success, and, also, to discover the receptacle of the coveted deed.

The city was full of the strange news of this affair before noon of the following day, and the papers issued an extra, giving the full details of it. A later edition announced the startling tidings of the suicide of Adam Pollard. He was found upon his bed that morning, writhing in the convulsions caused by strychnine, and died within the hour. It was also announced that Messrs. Bray and Black, the attorneys for Pollard, had precipitately fled, and that there was every reason to believe that the attempted robbery was deliberately planned by Pollard and his lawyers; and nobody, I believe, ever had any doubt about it afterward.

Of course the case of Anstruthers against Pollard abated with the death of the latter, as he had no heirs to dispute the title, and honest John Anstruthers was forthwith put in the full enjoyment of his rights. John took his great wealth easily, and lived and died the same plain John Anstruthers; but he will be remembered for his charities forever. Will and Molly lived the happiest kind of a married life, as they do now, and for a long time I was solely engaged in attending to Will's enormous property. As a man of means, Will has become a man of large influence and a very valuable citizen, and has been alderman twice. His oldest son, Armsly Reeves, is just beginning business for himself.

I have yet to tell the strangest part of this strange but true story—to account for the sudden and timely appearance of Reeves on the night of the robbery. I give it in his own language, as he told it to me.

"When that rascal came to the office in the afternoon, I was in the back room, unknown to you. I had gone in there before you returned from dinner, and, not feeling well, had lain down on the lounge. As you did not enter the room all the afternoon, of course

you did not know I was there. When I heard this man mention the case of Anstruthers against Pollard, my curiosity was excited, and I listened and watched at the door, which was slightly ajar. I grew suspicious of the fellow from the moment that I saw how his eyes shone when he saw the deed, and I particularly noticed what seemed to have escaped you, that he was so remarkably eager to see you *alone*, at ten o'clock, at the office. I made up my mind on the spot, that, without consulting you, I would take efficient measures to checkmate this fellow in what I more than half-suspected was a last desperate resort in the suit. I waited till you had left the office, and then went directly to the chief of police, and told him what I had heard and what I suspected. He readily agreed with me that mischief was afoot, and

detailed four men, with clubs, and revolvers, and lanterns, to accompany me. We were at the main entrance to the Block by ten; but the fellows moved so promptly that they nearly escaped us. We met them in the hall, as you know, when that wicked-looking chap who humbugged you so nicely pulled out his pistol and fired, without a word, making that flesh wound in my arm. A shot from one of the policeman killed him; another went wild; and then they all joined in with clubs to capture the other. It's a mystery to me how he escaped; they must have battered him sorely first. Molly says that this was the only night that I ever failed to fulfil an appointment with her; but I guess she understands now that if I had kept it that night, there would have been nothing for us, or for her father of JOHN ANSTRUTHER'S FORTUNE."

JOHN'S WIFE.

BY HELEN LUQUEER.

My bachelor quarters began to look cheerless enough as the holiday season approached, and I was all the more ready to accept the kind invitation of my friend John and his young wife, the mention of whose name always caused him to fly into raptures. Surely no man ever possessed such a paragon before! To believe his story, she was lovely, amiable, virtuous, beautiful, and everything else complimentary that could be applied to woman.

I had only John's story for this—was inclined to believe it but in part; and yet, as the time approached for my visit, I found myself waiting the day with interest, if not something like excitement, especially as he had informed me that his sister-in-law, Kitty Manvers, was to make one of the party. I even pictured her as being more beautiful and charming than John's wife, and indulged in various other bachelor fancies.

I arrived in the city of Boston on the day preceding Christmas, as I had some business to transact prior to visiting John's house. But, as I stepped out of the cars, I saw his carriage waiting, and bidding farewell to a final brushing up at a hotel, I took my place, drew on my gloves, gave an additional twirl to my mustache, and was quickly whirled to the Eden John was accustomed to call home.

A pretty little woman, not certainly the angel my friend had described, met me cordially, apologized for her husband's absence, informed me that he had suddenly been called away upon business, but would return early in the morning, and pleasantly added that he had consigned me to the care of her sister and herself.

"And this is my sister Kitty, of whom you have without doubt heard," she said, by way of introduction.

Miss Kitty, who had been coyly keeping herself in the background, stepped forward, and for a moment her soft hand lay like a rose-leaf in mine. As the light of the cheerful sea-coal fire and blazing chandelier fell upon her, I involuntarily uttered a whistle, which I awkwardly turned into a cough. The fact was, John's wife was but a foil to set off the beauty of her sister. Such gold-bronze, rippling hair above a brow of alabaster

whiteness, and such liquid, blue, speaking eyes I had never seen before. And the tall, graceful figure was in perfect keeping with the lovely face—there was nothing to mar the picture.

She received me with ladylike self-possession, such as is only to be acquired by those who mingle in the best society, and added her welcome to that already received from her sister. The dinner, such a one as I had long been a stranger to, as well as the evening, passed pleasantly. John's wife was charmingly social, and discoursed eloquently upon the subject of her husband. Of course I endorsed all she said upon the subject—said John was a lucky fellow, told how much I envied him his happiness, and caused her to blush prettily.

But for all my words, I had no eyes except for Kitty Manvers. She was crocheting a smoking-cap for John (how I wished it had been for me!), and as the scarlet wool twined in, and out, and around her swift, snowy little fingers, I thanked Heaven that John had married his wife and not her sister.

The evening came to an end long before I had wished it to do so. I had never seen time fly upon such swift wings, and regretted extremely when the hour for retiring was announced. I bade my hostess good-night, and looked at Kitty with eyes that spoke volumes of admiration, and caused the rich blood to fly in her cheeks like damask roses. Then, after lingering as long as politeness would admit, I went up to my room, and, lighting a cigar, sat dreamily smoking for an hour. And my cogitations ended in this; that I, Fred Dorson, was at last in love, and that at first sight, and that I would do my best to win the charming Kitty Manvers (if not already engaged) to be my wife.

The thought another might have been before me in the matter somewhat banished the castles I had been building in Spain. However, I could but try; so to assist the perfection of my plans, I smoked another "Partagas," wound my watch as the bell in a neighboring steeple was tolling midnight, laid it upon the table, placed a valuable and cherished diamond pin upon the cushion beside it, and speedily was in bed. Very soon I

began to drowse, and an undefined figure of Kitty, with wings like those of an angel, was beginning to float through my brain, when I was recalled from my wanderings to the stern realities of life. I was certain that I heard the creaking of a door, and raising myself cautiously upon my elbow, looked around. The fire was burning dimly; it was just the "witching hour when churchyards yawn" and disembodied spirits walk. Was the chamber I occupied a haunted one?

Had it been in reality so, I should not have been more astonished than I was to see John's wife stealing like a shadow into the room, clad in her long, snow-white night robes. "Great Heaven," I murmured, "what can this mean? Is the woman troubled with fits of lunacy? Is it not my duty to summon assistance for fear she may injure herself?" I certainly would have spoken to her, but surprise chained my tongue. She carried a small lamp in her hand—paused for an instant after crossing the threshold, and listened. Then, as if satisfied that I was sleeping, she advanced softly to the table, picked up my jewelry, and, without looking again at the bed, darted swiftly out of the room.

Great drops of perspiration stood upon my forehead, and it was fully ten minutes before my brain again began to act coherently, so spellbound and shocked was I. But as soon as possible I got up and went to the table, hoping that it was all a wild dream. No, my eyes had not deceived me. My watch and pin were both gone, and the door ajar. I opened it cautiously, and looked out into the hall. There was no one visible—not a sound to be heard. I again closed the door, this time taking good care to lock it, and returned to bed in no enviable state of mind, asking myself over and over again what it could possibly mean. Could it be that John's pretty and accomplished wife was a thief?

I shuddered at the thought, and yet what else could I decide upon? I had seen her enter the room at the dead midnight hour—had seen her pause and listen—had seen her glance anxiously around, as if fearful of detection—and, worse than all, had seen her appropriate and secrete my valuables. I had heard of such things before—of kleptomania in ladies rich and high in station, and at last was forced to the conclusion that my friend's wife was a victim of this unfortunate disease. What should I do?

I lay awake until nearly morning asking

myself the perplexing question. Did John know of the fatal habit of his wife? Did her sister—her sweet sister Kitty? Was it hereditary in the family? The thought was horrible, especially to one who had had his heart touched by her loveliness and winsome ways as mine had been.

But what was my duty? Clearly to inform John; and yet how could I do so? Certainly he would doubt my word—his wife would deny it, and he would believe her. Never was man in a more perplexing situation. I fell asleep without having formed any definite plan, and was awakened at a late hour by a loud rap upon my door, and the cheery voice of my friend John, telling me that the second bell had rung and breakfast was waiting—that I outdid the seven sleepers, and that he wanted to see me.

"What do you think of my wife?" was his first question. "Isn't she matchless perfection?—Beautiful, accomplished, and—"

"Certainly a wonderful woman," I replied; and then instantly resolved that I never would deceive so trusting and happy a heart—that he should never hear of the questionable proceedings of the previous night, but that I would quietly bide my time for an explanation, even though the loss to me was a great one.

When we entered the breakfast-room, John's wife came forward and greeted me just as cordially as she had done upon the previous evening. There was not the slightest hesitation, no deepening of color, no trembling of lip or voice when she asked me, in the most natural manner possible, if I had rested well and had sweet dreams. The question sent all the blood to my face, which fortunately was unnoticed, save the laughing remark from John, that "he never thought I was so bashful a man."

"What a hardened and consummate actor your wife must be," I thought, as I turned to speak to the blooming Kitty, who came in at the moment, dressed in a pretty morning-robe of azure silk, that set off her blonde complexion to the greatest advantage. In an instant my blood was in a gallop, and then surged back to my heart. Was she, too, a—I dared not think further.

But poor John! Some day he would learn his disgrace and her guilt—she whom he worshipped with such blind adoration. It would be terrible to such a heart as his—would crush him to the earth. Never did food choke me as much as then. The forced

attempt to appear cheerful was torture, and I was very glad when the meal was finished and we went out together, he happy in his undisturbed love, and I wearing a millstone about my heart.

We returned in the evening, John laden with packages, holiday gifts, and I too sad to have been even mindful of Kitty. John's wife met him in the hall with the kindest of words and sweetest of kisses—a serpent's tongue and a Judas kiss, as I could not help thinking. I did not envy him the endearments of the arch traitoress who could rob his friend under his own roof—who had no doubt invited him there for that especial purpose.

Kitty did not come down to dinner. Her sister said she was not well. The feast, for it was one in reality, was to me distasteful, and it was a relief to me to adjourn with John to the library, light our cigars, and talk over old college days. We passed an hour thus, the first pleasant one during the day; then John was summoned by his wife to attend her upon a little shopping expedition, and I was left alone again to my sad thoughts. But I was not to long remain thus. There was a soft tap upon the door, and Kitty Manvers entered. Her face was white as marble, her beautiful eyes red and swollen with weeping, her form trembling convulsively. In her hands she held my watch and diamond.

"O Mr. Dorson!" she said, sinking into the chair I presented, "are these yours?"

I simply bowed an affirmative; speak I could not.

"And you have missed them? What could you think of us?" And she burst into tears, and looked up to me in the most pleading manner.

"I can assure you that I had no hard or suspicious thoughts of *you*," I answered, despite of all my forebodings, and hastened to comfort her.

I drew my seat near to hers, took one of the little, trembling hands in my own, bent

forward—I could not resist the temptation—and touched the bright, sweetly-perfumed hair with my lips, and then, in the softest manner, told her of the scene in my bed-chamber. She looked up at me with consternation stamped upon every line of her beautiful face.

"You saw all this and have kept silence—have not even hinted it to my brother-in-law?"

"I certainly have kept the secret locked within my own breast."

"How much I thank you!" And the eyes spoke even more eloquently than the lips. "It would be a terrible blow to poor John, and nearly kill my sister, she is so exceedingly sensitive upon the subject."

Sensitive upon the subject? Was she, too, acting a part—trying to shield her sister?

"I have no doubt of it," I replied, coldly.

"And you will not mention the subject—will not think of it again?"

She must have noticed something strange in my manner, for she continued, hastily:

"O, you do not understand me! You think my sister guilty, and that I am trying to screen her!" And again the tears fell rapidly. "But it is not so—not so!"

I think the warm pressure of my hand somewhat comforted her. At the same instant the scales fell from my eyes, and I mentally called myself anything but complimentary names.

"Your sister is a somnambulist?" I asked.

"Yes, yes. I am so happy that you do not think any harm of her—of me!"

Both my voice and eyes soon convinced her of that, and though she gently extricated her hand from mine, we sat long in conversation.

The next night was a festive one. We danced together, and I stole a kiss under the mistletoe, and—well, Kitty wears the reset diamond, that once I sported, upon her finger, and I thank Heaven that my wife does not walk in her sleep.



THE BRONZE AVENGER.

BY JANE G. AUSTIN.

"If you would see fair Venice aright
Go visit it by the June sunlight!"

exclaimed Lionel Lee, standing in the Piazzas of San Marco, and admiring the graceful architecture and soft, warm tints of the buildings surrounding it, the deep Italian sky, the glimpse of blue water seen between the famous stone pillars at the foot of the Piazzetta, the brilliant crowd of chattering, gesticulating *contadini* who thronged the Square, celebrating the feast-day of some one of the myriad saints, in whose honor the Italian peasant makes holiday of half his life. Oftener than all else, however, the young American turned to look at the face of his pretty bride, lighted with the fervent enjoyment of a young girl who takes her first glimpse of the world by the side of the man she loves. Just now, however, she is pouting, as she exclaims:

"Shame, Lionel! I won't have my darling 'Lay of The Last Minstrel' parodied! It is one of the loveliest things I know, and it shan't be laughed at!"

"Laughed at! I was only adapting the lines to express my conviction that June is

the best month in the year to visit Venice," said Lionel.

"The signor is right," chimed in the valet-de-place, who, much to Edith's annoyance, seemed to consider that a great part of his duty consisted in superintending the conversation as well as the movements of the young couple. "Later in the summer," continued he, "it is so hot, so hot, and one cares nothing for sight-seeing. In the autumn we have those pests, the mosquitos, of a ferocity hardly to be told, and, moreover, the canals are stagnant and of a smell not admired by tourists; then comes the winter with its winds, O-o-o!"

And the long-drawn, shivering exclamation, with an appropriate gesture, expressed better than words Paolo's terror of the inclement season against which neither Italian houses nor Italian habits offer any effectual resistance.

"Now let us go into the cathedral," said Edith, a little impatiently, turning her back upon the talkative valet.

"One moment," interposed Paolo, as the young husband, with an affectionate smile, moved towards the great bronze doors, whose

exterior the bride was already curiously inspecting. "The signora will see the doors of Venice, surely? They are one of its prettiest sights."

"The doors! Where are they?" asked Edith, raising her eyes to the bronze horses over the doorway of the cathedral.

"Not there," said Paolo, with a faint shrug of his Italian shoulders. "Look, madam, at the Torre dell' Orologio; it is on the stroke of two."

He pointed, as he spoke, to the famous clock-tower adjoining the cathedral upon its northern side, whose gorgeous dial-plate of azure and gold, with the sun moving across his zodiacal signs around it, indicated, as Paolo said, the hour of two.

"What a strange clock, and what a curious tower! and what are those two statues of men, with hammers in their hands, each side of the bell on top of the tower?"

"Those are the Mons, signora. Look there." And, as the dial showed the precise hour of two, the bronze men upon the summit of the tower elevated their hammers, and brought them down upon the surface of the bell, once, twice, with a sonorous clang, resounding over all the noise and confusion of the Square.

"How curious! What makes them do that?" exclaimed the little bride.

"Because Pietro Lombardo so arranged it when he built this tower in 1404," replied the valet-de-place, tranquilly. "But look now, signora. See, see, see!"

And flinging his supple arm in every direction, Paolo pointed to the immense flocks of pigeons, which, starting from every roof, spire, dome, cornice of the buildings about the Piazza, darkened the air like a cloud for a moment, then settled down upon the pavement around the feet of an old man, who, with a measure of grain in his hand, stood smilingly watching until his "children," his "pretty ones," as he called them, in his soft, Venetian dialect, should be all assembled. Then, dipping his hand in the measure, he scattered the grain among them liberally and justly, while the merry crowd gave way on every side, leaving an open space in the neighborhood of the old man and his pets, whose movements they watched with the warmest interest.

"How pretty! how lovely! But how did they know that they should be fed at two o'clock? and who is the old man?" asked Edith, eagerly.

"They are the doves of Saint Mark, signora, and since the memory of man they have been fed here in the Piazza of Saint Mark at the public expense, daily, when the clock strikes two; and so well have they learned to count, that when the Mons up there strike the hour, the doves appear, flying from every quarter, as you see them now. How can I tell the way they know, I, a poor ignorant fellow?"

"It is very singular; and so is the clock, with the Mons, as you call them," said Edith, turning from the pigeons to the Orologio, and gazing at the bronze figures with an awe-stricken sort of curiosity. "And do they strike every hour like that, all night, and in stormy weather, and all the time?"

"Yes, signora, so sure as the hour comes round, the Mons strike it with their bronze hammers upon the bronze bell, and have done so since 1404, and may do so until 1894, if the saints will it."

"Can any one go up there?" was the next timid inquiry.

"No, signora, it is not safe, nor is there any reward for going up there. One can ascend the Campanile across the Square there, and have a fine view, from a height of 323 feet. The Orologio is not near so high as that, as one may easily see."

"But I don't care a bit for a fine view, and I want to see the bronze men," murmured Edith, pettishly, in her husband's ear; who laughingly replied:

"A true woman! She only cares for what she cannot have. Come, we will see the cathedral first, at any rate."

"It is not always so safe to ascend the Orologio," continued Paolo, leading the way into the vestibule of the church, "as the Signor Andrea found to his cost."

"What was it that happened to the Signor Andrea?" asked Edith, turning eagerly back.

"It is a legend, signora; but it takes time in the telling, and if the signor likes, I can give it to you better in the evening at the Albergo Reale."

"That is our hotel, is it not? Well, come there and tell us the story this evening. Shall he not, Lionel?" asked Edith, eagerly.

"Surely, dear, if it will amuse you," said he, with an indulgent smile. And then the party moved on across the vestibule, to the point where a square of red marble let into the pavement marks the scene of the reconciliation of the Pope Alexander III. and the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, who was slain

to purchase peace by humiliating himself upon the ground before the haughty pontiff, who, placing his foot upon the imperial head, pronounced the words, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder;" and so through the Byzantine door, into the body of the grand, rich and gloomy church.

That evening, dinner over, the married lovers, seated in their balcony above the Riva dei Schiavoni, dreamily watched the day dying in soft splendor from the deep-blue sky and the glossy surface of the lagoons, leaving that bewildering half-light, through which everything looks lovelier than in the glare of noonday. Even Edith's fresh young beauty assumed a tenderer grace; and Lionel, gazing at her in silent delight, thought that he need not have travelled thousands of miles to gaze upon the pictured loveliness of bygone years when the crown and jewel of all human beauty was his own.

From this tender reverie the young man was aroused by the soft, lisping accents of Paolo's Venetian tongue.

"Will the signor and signora listen now to the story of the clock-tower?"

Lionel turned impatiently, with a refusal upon his tongue; but Edith forestalled him with her eager reply:

"Yes indeed, this is the very time to listen to a story! I am so glad you have come, Paolo. Sit down there in the window and begin."

"I had rather have told you a certain old story over again," murmured Lionel, reproachfully; but Edith only replied by a bewitching little grimace, and the valet began without further preamble:

"It was a century and a half ago that Tomasso Candeo was appointed by the governors of the city as the custodian of the Torre dell' Orologio and its wonderful clock, not to mention the Mons and the bell they guard by day and night. Tomasso, who was a poor man, and not by any means certain of his daily macaroni, accepted the appointment joyfully, and forthwith removed himself, his few belongings, and his daughter Giulia, into the apartments in one of the wings of the tower reserved for the keeper.

"Giulia Candeo was at that time, or so the story runs, the most beautiful woman in Venice, with soft, dark eyes, a wealth of red-gold hair rippling to her feet, lips that her father-confessor never dared to contemplate, and a figure lent her by our fair Lady Venus, who queens it, as you know, in the neighbor-

isle of Cyprus. With all this, the clock-keeper's pretty daughter was as good as she was beautiful, and not even the scandal-mongers of Venice, who claim the most venomous tongues and the sharpest eyes in all Italy, found a word to say in her dispraise. Of course she had lovers in plenty, although her golden hair was all her wealth, and from among them all she had selected Giuseppe Aretino, a handsome young gondolier of the Canalazzo, for her especial attendant and possible husband, although this preferment, as the fair Giulia took pains to make him understand, depended altogether upon her own sovereign caprice and pleasure in the future. Meantime she allowed him to accompany her to the festas and church holidays, to offer her flowers, confetti and ribbons, and to take her out occasionally in his gondola, with a convenient old deaf aunt for duenna.

"It was on one of these occasions that Giuseppe, whose eyes and ears were within his own gondola instead of on the surrounding objects, had the misfortune to drive the sharp prow of his boat directly through the side of another gondola, belonging, as ill luck would have it, to the Signor Andrea Manfrini, one of the wealthiest, wickedest and worst-tempered nobles in Venice. The gondola Manfrini wounded to the death filled and sank almost immediately, barely allowing time for its master and his two gondoliers to throw themselves on board the craft of their assailant, who received them with every attention and profuse apologies, none of which, however, had the slightest effect in softening the wrath of the Signor Manfrini, who poured out such a torrent of abuse and profanity upon the unlucky Giuseppe that the poor youth could hardly obey the command to turn immediately in the direction of the Palazzo Manfrini. But while the fury of the noble lord was at its height, and after Giuseppe had ceased attempting to murmur a word in his defence, and while his two brother gondoliers rejoiced at hearing some one else receive the abuse generally bestowed upon themselves, the sliding door of the cabin in the centre of the boat was thrown back, and Giulia Candeo stood in the opening, beautiful and angry as an avenging angel.

"'Signor,' said she, fixing her eyes upon the Manfrini, who stopped and turned to gaze at her, 'the harm to your gondola was an accident. Giuseppe is as sorry for it as you can be; but your life is safe, and you are

rich enough to lose a gondola every day without missing it. Why, then, this fury and these words, which will certainly wake the sleeping saints and bring them down to take vengeance upon us all?

"And who are you, *figliamla*? and why do you speak thus earnestly for Giuseppe, if that is the name of this clumsy fellow?" asked Signor Andrea, in a very different voice from that he had hitherto used.

"I am only Giulia Candeo, signor, and I speak for Giuseppe because you treat him too harshly," said the girl, coloring a little beneath the glowing eyes of Signor Andrea, who, motioning her to reenter the cabin, followed her in, and threw himself upon one of the cushioned benches.

"And what is Giuseppe to you, my child?" asked he, after glancing impatiently at the deaf old aunt crossing herself in the corner.

"He is only a friend and neighbor," said Giulia, seating herself close beside the aunt.

"O! Well, is he rich?"

"Saint Marco, no! How should he be rich?" exclaimed the girl.

"I do not know; how should I? Only I was wondering if it would be troublesome for him to pay the hundred zecchini in which he stands indebted to me."

"A hundred zecchini! Mother of mercies, signor, you cannot mean it!" exclaimed Giulia, in dismay.

"No less will pay for the loss of my gondola and the furniture it contained," said Manfrini, tranquilly.

"O signor! And when poor Giuseppe cannot pay, what will be done next?" asked Giulia, clasping her hands and fixing her dark eyes upon the face of Signor Andrea, who quietly replied:

"Then I shall take his gondola, and whatever else he possesses, and sell them. After that, if the sum is not sufficient, I shall take his body."

"Holy Maria! And what will you do with it?" gasped Giulia.

"Not eat it, child; only put it in prison until the debt is paid."

"But it will never be paid. How can it be?"

"That is for Giuseppe to say—or you, *cara mia*."

"Me?"

"Yes. You take such an interest in the fellow, that I supposed you might be willing to help him," said Manfrini, indifferently.

"And so I would, with all my heart, if I

only knew how; but I am as poor as he," replied Giulia, sadly.

"Not quite, for you have fingers. What can you do with them?" asked Manfrini, with an odd laugh.

"Do with them?" echoed Giulia.

"Yes. You do some sort of work for your living, do you not? Can you embroider like this?" And the nobleman touched the front of his gorgeous doublet, stiff with the richest embroidery.

"No," said Giulia, mournfully shaking her head; but as her eyes wandered over the dress to which Signor Andrea had called her attention, they brightened suddenly.

"Your lace ruffles are torn, signor. I can mend them so that they will look like new," exclaimed she.

"Can you so? Then all is arranged. I have quantities of lace, useless now through just such rents as this. You shall mend it all, and I will pay you richly."

"And you will not take Giuseppe's gondola, or shut him up in prison?" asked Giulia, with sparkling eyes.

"H—m! I do not know about that. You will work all the faster, if it is to liberate your lover that you are working."

"He is not my lover, and I would not be so mean as you make me out for the world!" said Giulia, indignantly.

"Say you so? Well, we will see. I can give no answer to-night, but to-morrow I will come and bring the lace, and tell you what I will do. Meantime, Giuseppe may go at large."

"Thanks, signor, O thanks!" exclaimed Giuseppe's pretty partisan. And, in the extremity of her gratitude, she seized Signor Andrea's hand and would have carried it to her lips, but he forestalled her by throwing his arm about her waist, and pressing his lips firmly upon her own.

"You shall not kiss my hand, pretty one," said he; "but if you owe me any gratitude, show it in this manner."

"Well, then, signor, the debt is paid, and for the future we will settle them in a different fashion," replied the young girl, blushing a little angrily, although not wishing to displease the powerful noble who held Giuseppe's future, as it were, in the hollow of his hand.

"Manfrini only laughed; but as the gondola grated against the steps of his palace and he rose to depart, he murmured in the girl's ear:

"Be advised, Giulia, and say nothing of this bargain to Giuseppe. Wait until you

can tell him of his danger and his escape at the same moment.'

"'Si, signor,' replied Giulia, in the same tone. And Manfrini left the gondola with only a scowl and muttered curse in passing for the trembling Giuseppe.

"The next day, about dusk, the Signor Manfrini, wrapped in a mantle, and covering his face with the flap of his slouched hat, knocked at the door of the clock-keeper's lodging, and was at once admitted by Giulia, who, poor child, had been all day trembling lest he should not come, or lest her poor efforts should prove insufficient to pay her lover's debt. Poor child, indeed, who could not guess that were she the veriest botcher who ever put needle to lace, she was sure of employment from the Signor Andrea Manfrini, and praise enough for it, too.

"And now, while with trembling fingers she turned over the little parcel of laces her visitor had brought, and asked some questions about his intentions touching Giuseppe, the wily libertine feasted upon her marvellous beauty, affected harshness and anger that he might see her dark eyes all glittering with tears rise imploringly to his, and then relenting, made her glow and smile with half-promises of kindness and pardon for Giuseppe, and rich patronage for herself.

"In the midst of this talk entered old Tomasso Candeo, and stood aghast at the haughty and richly-dressed stranger whom he found within his home. Giulia hastened to present her father, and then to explain to him something of the circumstances which had brought so unusual a visitor.

"The old man listened with many a low bow and muttered word of apology and thanks to the noble signor, but at the end craftily insinuated that although Giulia was but too much honored by mending the torn laces of his lordship, it was by no means necessary that she should undertake to pay the debts of Giuseppe Aretino, who was nothing more than a mere acquaintance and neighbor of his and his daughter's.

"To these suggestions Signor Andrea listened with a smile of wily contempt, and at the end nodded significantly.

"When the laces are done, old man, bring them yourself to the Palazzo Manfrini, and wait until you see me. I will then tell you what I am thinking of in this matter. Farest Giulia, when will the task be done?"

"To-morrow night, signor; but you will not refuse to let me pay Giuseppe's debt? I

do not care for the work else. I have no need of money for myself or my father.'

"You shall know to-morrow night, *bell'amia*, when your father brings home my laces. I must see how well you have done it before I can decide upon its price,' said Signor Andrea, somewhat coldly; and went away without another word.

"I am afraid I have offended him! Why did he go so suddenly? Perhaps, after all, he will give me no more work to do; and then poor Giuseppe!" exclaimed the girl, gazing after her guest until old Tomasso, chuckling and grinning, clapped her under the chin, and said:

"Fear not, *figlia mia*. Your fortune and mine too shall yet be made by this generous Signor Andrea.'

"If I can only get Giuseppe out of danger, I do not want any other fortune,' said Giulia, simply.

"The next evening, about sunset, a stranger hired Giuseppe and his gondola for the whole night, and directed him to steer for the island of La Grazia, where his passenger landed, ordering the gondolier to moor his craft and await his return, which event did not occur until sunrise the next morning.

"Tomasso Candeo, meantime, the packet of lace in his hand, presented himself at the Palazzo Manfrini, and was at once admitted to the private cabinet of the signor. What passed between these two men, who shall say? Manfrini was wealthy, unscrupulous and peremptory; the old clock-keeper was poor, cowardly and subservient to those above him. At the end of half an hour he left the cabinet of the noble lord, a strange glitter in his eyes, and his right hand hidden within the breast of his doublet. From the door of the Palazzo Manfrini, he went straight to a trattoria, where he soon found a comrade for a game of dice; and about the time that Giuseppe, weary and uneasy, was urging his gondola homeward, his future father-in-law was staggering out of a gaming-house, half wild with rage and drink, and without a scudo in his pockets.

"The poor old sinner had hardly departed before the Signor Andrea also left his Palazzo, and a few moments later knocked at the door of the clock-tower. Again it was Giulia who opened to him, and again joyfully. Manfrini entered, closing the door behind him.

"The tradition tells not the fashion of his wooing; how he found words to propose the vile terms upon which he would release

Giuseppe from debt, or what Giulia replied; only we may guess the horror and dismay that filled her innocent heart, and the scorn with which she rejected the addresses of the libertine noble.

"Angry and determined, he attempted to seize her in his arms. She fled, and unable to open the door into the Square, escaped through that leading by a winding staircase to the top of the tower, meaning to call for assistance from the summit, or perhaps, if better might not be, to throw herself over.

"But fast as she fled Manfredi pursued, and just as she emerged upon the platform, he seized her in his arms, placing one hand over her mouth to stifle her cries; for even in those wild days there would have been a rescue had her danger been known. He seized her, and she, struggling desperately, dragged him towards the edge of the platform.

"'Cease this foolish resistance,' panted Manfredi. 'You are mine. Not heaven itself can rescue you!'

The impious challenge was answered

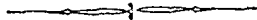
almost before it was spoken; for at that very instant the dial below his feet pointing to the hour, the bronze man around whose body the libertine had thrown an arm to stay Giulia's frantic progress, heaved back his arm, the ponderous hammer crashed down upon Manfredi's head, and with one horrid groan he staggered, fell, and rolled heavily over the edge of the tower to the pavement below.

"When Giulia's shrieks, now unrestrained, summoned assistance, the dead and mangled body of Andrea di Manfredi was found lying before the door whose threshold he had sought to pollute.

"Such, signor and signora, is the legend of the 'Torre dell' Orologio of the Piazza San Marco."

"But Giulia?" asked Edith Lee, through her tears.

"She married Giuseppe, and between them they took care of poor old Tomasso, who went melancholy mad," said Paolo, rising to take his leave with a soft "*buona notte, signora.*"



THE BROTHERS.

BY RICHARD FAULKNER.

A FINE park, sloping down to a wide river, a pond where two fair swans were floating, green fields and meadows stretching far away, and rich pastures where the red cows cropped the fragrant grass, or stood, knee-deep, in the pools of water—a stately house with a little brown gothic lodge, near the gates.

This was the home of Mr. St. John, a wealthy land-holder, having one fortune in possession and another in expectance from his father.

The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. St. John and two sons, both of whom had attained to their majority. Arthur was twenty-two—Aubrey twenty-four years of age.

The father of Mr. St. John always came hither in the summer, to escape the heat of the city; and with him came his only granddaughter, Helen Ballyntyne.

Helen's father and mother were dead; and every summer since her birth, she had been brought to this delightful place by her grandfather, who would not be separated from his darling.

The elder St. John was a handsome, noble looking man, with long white hair curling about his shoulders, an erect figure, and a face that wore not a single wrinkle.

His son resembled him, and looked nearly as old as his father. Mrs. St. John was a fair, mild woman, of extreme softness of manner, a pale, sweet face and a slight figure. She was as amiable in temper as she was beautiful in person.

Heaven had denied her daughters, and every affection she possessed was bestowed upon her two sons, until little Helen Ballantyne claimed her love. The orphan child appealed too strongly to that motherly heart, to be cast off, and now, in her seventeenth year, she was as dear to Mrs. St. John as were her own children.

Mr. St. John had never desired his sons to enter into any profession; but it chanced that both were bent on going to sea. They were never happier than when upon the ocean, and they entered the navy the moment their education and age permitted them.

There was a strong resemblance between the two brothers. It was difficult to distinguish them, unless one had known them long.

Indeed, Helen Ballantyne often boasted that she was the only one, except the father and mother, who could tell at all times, which was Arthur and which was Aubrey. She knew their very shadows apart, by sunlight or moonlight alike. She knew by the softest footfall—by the sound of their breathing—by the slightest quiver in their voices, although, to others, even to the servants of the family who had long watched them, they were undistinguishable.

Both loved the beautiful cousin who always came with the summer butterflies, to spend that glorious season at their home. She had been the cause of many a boyish quarrel, and, in maturer years, the jealousy had not worn out. But Helen, true to her first childish preference, returned the deep love of Aubrey with all the strength and energy of her being. The younger brother might have seen that it was so, but he was willfully blind. He would not believe that he was not her chosen love, and he construed every kind word or friendly deed into proofs of her passion for him.

Aubrey, with a delicacy that few would have shown, even to a brother, forbore to press an engagement with Helen while she was so young; leaving her ample time to recall her heart, if she should meet with another who should impress her more strongly than he had done. He generously favored her mingling with society, that she might better prove the stability of her affections; while Arthur murmured at what he called her liking for new faces and friends, and did all he could to prevent her from forming new acquaintances. Outside of his passionate and unreasoning love for Helen, Arthur was the most gentle of human beings. It had changed the whole aspect of his life toward others. If he could believe that Aubrey was beloved by her, it would have changed his brotherly affection into hatred. As it was, he was content. He believed that if Helen was really attached to Aubrey, there would have been a settled engagement long ago. He could not see that it was from tenderness to him that it was delayed.

He broke in upon their most confidential moments, therefore, without the least scruple; fairly dragging Helen away, to ride, or drive,

or sail, as the humor seized him, if he could only secure her presence to himself.

Late, one evening, he came in thus, and insisted on her going out to sail with him. Aubrey, seeing Helen's distress, combated the idea and positively forbade Helen to go with him. Arthur grew furious, and threatened Aubrey in an irritating and insulting tone. The elder brother replied calmly but positively, and motioned for Helen to retire. Dreading what might be said or done, she stayed; and Arthur gathered encouragement from this that she would go with him.

Aubrey was roused now. He laid his hand on Helen's arm, and by the mere force of his silent but controlling will, he led her from the room.

She cast back a look as if involuntarily. Arthur read it favorably to himself. He passed between them and caught her hand.

With the power which superior calmness gives, Aubrey drew Helen again to himself. His brother saw his advantage and struck him. Helen, roused to the consciousness of her love for Aubrey, cast a look of anger upon the aggressor and exclaimed:

"Touch him not! He is mine—the dearest friend I have on earth."

"I hate him doubly for that," responded Arthur; while he repeated the cowardly blow.

Aubrey wiped the blood from his face, while Helen clung to him, passionately, imploring him to leave the room. She needed not to fear now. The first sight of the blood had caused a revulsion in the erring brother's feelings. All enmity to Aubrey died out with that sight. He went up to him with a pale face over which the tears were streaming.

"Forgive me, Aubrey. I was mad, O Helen, Helen! why did you ever come here to put trouble between us two?"

Still holding his handkerchief to his bleeding face, Aubrey kindly answered his plea for forgiveness.

"I hold no ill temper towards you, brother Arthur; but in this matter, you must cease to interfere. Helen is my promised wife. It is time that it should be avowed, since you will not otherwise be convinced. She has told you herself how dear I am to her. For me, I own she is the only woman I have ever loved—the only one I ever can love. Why do you try to come between us, Arthur? Let this unworthy mood pass away from you. God knows I would sacrifice anything to you but my Helen's happiness. Speak to him, Helen!

tell him that these are no idle words of mine."

"He tells the truth, Arthur. We have long been promised to each other. You must be satisfied to hold the place of brother in my heart."

"Never, Helen! The first place or none."

The moody, discontented frame of mind had returned, and again he was a prey to anger and jealousy. They left him, feeling sadly that the old brotherly love had met with an interruption that might be lasting as life.

That very night the brothers were ordered to appear before the department and receive their appointments to new duties.

Helen was in despair. She dreaded their going away in the same ship, as was highly probable they would. You can readily see how natural it was for her to be alarmed. And yet she dared not name her fears to the family; so she suffered in secret. Had she known that Arthur, in a burst of temper, on the evening previous to leaving home had openly insulted his father, because of some fancied preference on Mr. St. John's part towards Aubrey, her fears for her lover would have been augmented.

That Aubrey was innocent of any intention to supplant him in his father's affection or favor, may well be believed. Mr. St. John had hitherto preserved a strict impartiality between his children, and Aubrey, while he determined to avow his engagement to the family, scorned the idea of complaining to them of Arthur's waywardness, and trusted that time would set all things right.

The brothers left home, but not together. Aubrey took an early train, supposing that Arthur would accompany him; but the latter stayed an hour behind, in the hope of inducing Helen to recall her rejection of him; of course, his hope was vain. Helen had gone to her chamber, after parting with Aubrey; and although she heard his brother call her many times, she gave no sign. She had no enmity to Arthur, but she shrank from him as a lover; and Aubrey was too dear to her to admit of any rival. Her parting with Aubrey seemed too sacred to admit of seeing another face so soon after the separation.

Arthur turned from the house with feelings of rage and disappointment. He had hoped that, if once Aubrey was away, he might have some chance of success; but his continual presence and the power he exerted over Helen had been, he thought, the only bar to her loving him as well as she did his brother.

He placed some reliance, too, on his beauty. Arthur was very handsome—far more so than Aubrey—although the latter passed for the perfection of manly beauty with most people. With others, Arthur's bright brown locks and beautiful eyes won the day. Helen preferred the fair, curling hair and soft blue eyes of Aubrey, but it was, after all, the beauty of his mind and the gentleness of his disposition which bound her to him in bonds that mere personal advantages seldom weave in the heart of a truly sensible woman. And Helen, young as she was, had a soul that looked beyond externals.

The brothers were gone. The house seemed lonely enough, now that their voices were unheard, and their presence missed from the household gathering. Helen almost wished that her grandfather would return to town, that her time and mind might be more occupied; but she would not express the wish, for she knew how well he enjoyed the beauty and freshness of the country.

August and September went by, and October came with its full flush of magnificence. Nothing had been heard from the brothers, after they had sailed for the Pacific. Helen wandered through the grand old woods around Mr. St. John's dwelling; her heart touched and her mind elevated by the constant intercourse with nature, and her cheeks glowing with health and beauty caught from the balmy air which she breathed. She sat for hours by the side of the beautiful streams that watered this lovely spot, or trod the fields, still rich with autumn beauty, or lost herself in the deep woods, until her grandfather, alarmed at her absence, would seek her and playfully chide her gipsy wanderings.

November approached, turning these delightful scenes into its sombre coloring. Helen's mind took the hue of the season. She was haunted by an indefinable sadness, which began to tell its story upon her pale lips and fading cheeks. Dreams, gloomy and troubled, visited her the moment she fell asleep, and, waking from them, she felt a horror and misery, as if they had been real.

There was but one way that she could account for it—and that was the uneasiness which she sometimes had felt in regard to the feelings which she feared Arthur still cherished towards his brother.

She would feel angry at herself, every time this idea presented itself to her mind. She could not, in her sober senses, believe that

Arthur meditated wrong against Aubrey. She reasoned with herself, that, once away from her, and dependent on each other's society, or thrown into the exciting scenes of their professional life, they would forget that there had ever been a shadow of discontent between them.

But she longed earnestly for confirmation of this hope, and watched with eager eyes for the sight of Aubrey's promised letter.

And slowly and sadly to her, the year deepened into its winter and still no letter came.

They had gone back to town; but the town had no charms for her. Her grandfather had ceased urging her to go out, and permitted her to remain most of the time in her own room, undisturbed. She had watched the newspapers eagerly, but had generally been forced to wait for them until her grandfather had perused them; and it had been his habit to take them into his private room, to which Helen had no access. Whenever, by chance, she obtained one, it was sure to contain no news for her; and her suspicions were awakened that others were kept purposely from her sight. Often, a portion of the paper was torn off before it reached her; and, in not a few instances, the newspaper which she most wished to see, as it contained a daily "Naval Record," was left for her, with the corner containing it torn off altogether.

Anxious and troubled, yet unwilling to ask her grandfather why this happened, because it seemed a matter of little importance, she endured her suspense in silence.

Mr. St. John had some reason for trying to withhold any knowledge of what the papers stated, until it should be proved true or false.

There had been a rumor—a bare rumor—but enough to excite apprehension in his mind—*enough indeed, had he revealed it, to bring anguish and misery to his darling's heart.* The rumor was of Aubrey St. John's disappearance from the ship, a mysterious disappearance, which his well-known honor and integrity forbade all idea of being attributed to desertion, but which could be accounted for in no other way—unless, indeed, in one which seemed almost beyond the bounds of probability—that his disappearance was owing to some treachery on the part of his brother.

Every one on board who knew the brothers, scouted at this idea, except one man; and he barely hinted at his suspicion, giving no reason why or how it was awakened, and never putting it in the form of an accusation.

That he held such an opinion, indeed, was never avowed at all, but merely implied, more by involuntary words—sentences broken off abruptly and never resumed, than by any direct manifestation.

But this man—*Elihu Whiting*—was known as an enemy of *Arthur St. John*, and therefore no one believed it the more.

Twice, the man at the helm had been startled at his post by the sight of a figure which he would have said at first thought, was that of *Lieutenant Aubrey St. John*. But at both times, it was too dark to recognize more than the bare outline of the form, and he had been too much confused to challenge the apparition, and as the commanding officer did not press the question upon him, he gradually came to think it an optical illusion.

The same thing had happened, too, to arrest the attention of one who was keeping the midnight watch: but he kept his own counsel, and no one but his companion in the watch knew it. Something of superstitious fear swayed both these men; for both believed that *St. John* was beneath the waves. Both had heard high words proceeding from *Arthur's* lips, in which he had betrayed violent passion. *Aubrey* had replied calmly, which had only served to enrage his brother the more. Further than that, his disappearance left no clue by which to trace him.

On the night in which *Aubrey* and *Arthur* met on the deck, the latter had used some irritating words to his brother; charging him with supplanting him in the affections, not only of *Helen*, but also in those of his father and mother. *Aubrey* replied dispassionately, at which the other fired still more. He was like a madman, threatening *Aubrey* with unheard-of punishments and retributions if he did not at once withdraw his claim to *Helen*. The idea seemed so perfectly ridiculous, that *Aubrey* could not believe him in earnest, and he laughingly replied that he would wait until *Helen* should declare her preference for *Arthur*, "although," he added, "I think she will hardly revoke her choice, as she has promised to marry me on my return."

Maddened by this, *Arthur* pushed heavily against his brother. *Aubrey* reeled and fell over. He uttered no cry, and the waves drowned all noise which he might have made in falling.

Two thoughts burned deeply in the breast

of *Arthur*. One was that the brother he had once loved had died by his hand. All the dear and precious memories of their childhood—*Aubrey's* kind, loving care of his little brother—the sweet, forgiving smile with which he had looked upon him when he was fretful or passionate—all these must have rushed upon his mind. Then came the other dark and evil thought, that now *Helen* was free—free for him! It surged over all better feelings, as the waves might be surging over *Aubrey's* lifeless body; and still he kept on, thinking one moment of giving the alarm—then, half-maddened with the recollection that *Aubrey* must have known and felt that he intended the injury—O! any way he could look was madness; and while he deliberated upon the chances of *Aubrey* denouncing him as willfully attempting his murder, the time went by and it was all too late to retrieve the sin. Yet, from that moment, he carried a load of anguish within his bosom that demons might have pitied and deprecated. All the horrors of the infernal regions seemed opened before him, and, when morning came and news was brought to him that his brother could not be found, he could with difficulty refrain from shrieking out his agony.

His misery passed for anxiety at *Aubrey's* disappearance—his deadly paleness, and the fever that followed, bore testimony, it was thought, to his brotherly affection.

He strove to comfort himself that he had not intended murder—that he had not planned *Aubrey's* death. True, he had not—but he had let him die without raising a finger to help him, and had concealed his danger until it was too late! Too late! The words rang in his ear, and he saw them written everywhere in letters of blood. It was the old, old story of *Cain*—jealousy, madness and murder in the heart of man toward his brother!

Every one on board ship mourned the loss of *Aubrey St. John*. He had been universally beloved for his quiet, unassuming kindness to all. Some of the roughest sort hardly sought to disguise their opinion that the other brother would have been far less missed; although *Arthur* himself was not unkind nor overbearing to the men; and certainly was not nearly as dignified. Both were brave and manly; both companionable, and, at times, mirthful. But the rude sons of the ocean are gifted with the power of reading character with wonderful accuracy, and it had been evident enough that *Aubrey* had received the

"larger half" of their love and respect. The same feeling, but better disguised, had prevailed among the officers.

A kind and beneficent Providence saved Aubrey St. John from drowning on that eventful night, and saved Arthur also from being an actual murderer, in deed, if not in heart. The current bore him out from the ship and carried him far away. He was a good swimmer, and sustained himself in this peril as few would have done. He was nearly exhausted, however, from the weight of his clothing. He was almost in despair, when he saw a light from a vessel. He gathered up all his remaining strength to cry for help—was heard by the watch, and in a short time was taken up by one of the boats sent out to his aid.

Hours passed in which he lay insensible; but the unwearied efforts of his preservers, aided by a fine constitution, brought back the fleeting breath once more.

The vessel proved to be a barque from California to New York, commanded by a Captain Blanchard; a large-hearted, noble man who spared no pains to render Aubrey's situation more tolerable. Anxiety had done more to weaken his frame than even his perilous contact with the waves had done. He was in terror lest Arthur should be suspected of attempting his life; and the uncertainty he felt was almost intolerable. Arthur might have criminated himself in his terror; and then, how would his poor mother bear it? for Arthur was, undeniably, his mother's darling, and to touch him with the shadow of evil would deprive her of her senses, surely.

Meantime, the barque was ploughing her restless course homeward. Soon, very soon, he would be once more on land. How would he meet them at home? How disguise the strange things that had happened since he last saw the loving eyes that beamed upon him when he left them—beamed upon him even through tears. And yet, what the coming home be to him, compared with what might await Arthur? Alas, poor Arthur! was the one thought in his mind—the word rising ever to his lips when alone.

He landed in New York with a feeling too sad for tears.

On the second day, he went home. He had already announced by a despatch, that he would be with them on the following morning—an announcement that brought surprise as well as pleasure to Mr. St. John and his wife.

Never, in his whole life, was Aubrey so embarrassed as when he entered their presence. He tried hard to make it appear that it was the most natural affair possible; but they felt sure that there must be some mystery behind his words.

Had he reported himself to the department? they asked.

"Of course, father. That was my first duty; my next was to you, and my third to grandfather and Helen."

"But it is so mysterious how you should have gone overboard and no one to see or try to save you."

Aubrey smiled faintly.

"There are a great many mysteries in life," he said. "I must have mine, too. The department does not blame me for being unfortunate. I am sure you will not."

"Blame you, my dear boy! We have never done that in your life. We shall not now, surely."

"I shall not be here long to share your blame, if you do," he replied, cheerfully. "I am ordered away in a fortnight."

"In a fortnight! Then, wife, we will not waste time upon mysteries, but content ourselves with realities."

His reception at his grandfather's the next day was enthusiastic. There was no talk of mysteries there. Helen shuddered at the danger he had escaped, but her unsophisticated nature saw nothing beyond, and her grandfather was as simple-hearted as herself.

He had told her how soon he was going, and asked her if she would marry him before his departure. She made no difficulty, if her grandfather would consent; and he was willing enough, so long as she was not to be taken away from him.

"I cannot live without her, Aubrey," he said; "so if you want her, you must consent to the encumbrance of an old man. When I die, I shall leave all to you two."

"What, and nothing for Arthur?" said Aubrey. "Indeed, grandfather, neither Helen nor I will ever consent to defraud Arthur of his share. But you will live many years, I trust, to enjoy it yourself. And if you give me Helen, I shall need nothing more."

So Aubrey's father and mother came, and a quiet wedding took place, although the fond old man would fain have gathered a crowd to see his beloved child wedded.

On the whole, Aubrey was rather glad to go away, that he might not meet Arthur

again until a long time should elapse—until, indeed, Arthur should have been familiarized with the fact of his having irrecoverably lost all chance of rivalling him. Perhaps, when a long absence had worn away past impressions, they might once more meet as brothers; but now, the idea was very painful to him, as much for Arthur's sake as his own.

“Man proposes; God disposes.” Aubrey had sailed but a single month, before the news came of Arthur's death. It was long before the tidings could reach Aubrey; but when they did, he sorrowed, most of all, that he should have died without the forgiveness he had been longing to bestow.

Arthur—so wrote the surgeon, in his letter to Mr. St. John, announcing his death—had wasted from the night his brother was missing. He had no disease; but grief and sorrow wore out his life. It was evident, from the tone of this letter, that he was not aware that Aubrey had been saved.

Aubrey kept the secret from all except from her who had a right to know it. He would not destroy, or even shake his parents' faith in Arthur; but allowed them to mourn for him in such quiet sorrow as might linger around the memory of one of whom they had known nothing that was not good and pleasant.

THE BULLY OF THE FORECASTLE.

BY W. H. MACY.

"WHY do you abuse that boy so? What has he been guilty of?"

"That's no affair of yours, so don't be getting yourself into trouble. I'll beat the boy as much as I like, and lick any man that takes his part! D'ye mind that? If there's any man in the forecastle that don't like it, let him take it up!" The speaker uttered these words of defiance in a loud, boastful tone, and glared round upon us all like a wild beast at bay.

There is to be found in almost every ship's company, as indeed elsewhere where a considerable number of men are thrown together, some one who assumes the position of bully, and rules, for a time, over the rest with a rod of iron. In virtue of a victory or two, cheaply won at the outset of the voyage, and a vast amount of swagger, he holds this position for a longer or shorter period, till he is either put down by a combination of several of his shipmates, or until circumstances bring out a champion who defeats him, and puts an end to his tyranny. In the latter case, the champion is, in almost every instance, some quiet, good-tempered man, who has scarcely ever been known to quarrel with any of his shipmates, and who has, up to the time of throwing off the yoke, submitted to insult and abuse for the sake of peace. Of course the office of bully becomes vacant from that time forth; for a man of this class, after being once whipped, never recovers his lost ground; his prestige is gone, in *that* ship, at least; he must leave her and join another, if he desires again to hold the same position; while the victor, being usually a man of very different character, who fights only to resist oppression, there is no fear that he will presume at all upon his success.

The bully on board the Madagascar was a tall, bony man, with a repulsive cast of countenance, who had joined us at Rarotonga several months before. Nothing was known of his previous history or his nationality. He had commenced his swaggering career very soon after coming on board, and had managed in two or three cases to put down his opponents by threats alone. No one had yet ventured to tackle to him seriously, with a determination to whip or be whipped. Thus

emboldened by the apparent cowardice of all his shipmates, Ned Bowers, as he was called, had inaugurated himself the bully of the crew, and now hurled defiance in the teeth of any man who should dare to remonstrate against his brutal treatment of the boy Ben.

Cromwell, the young man who had ventured to ask what the boy's offence was, evidently felt that a test of his manhood had come, when he heard the answer and challenge of Bowers; but still he hesitated ere he made any reply. He was a Martha's Vineyarder, a quiet, steady young man, and a genial companion, beloved and respected by us all. No one ever had a quarrel with John Cromwell; he never gave cause of offence to any one, and heretofore he had managed to avoid coming into direct collision with the bully.

"You all understand me, I suppose?" said Bowers; "so, as there is no man feels able to take it up, of course no one will have any more lip about it;" at the same time giving another severe kick to the little fellow who had incurred his displeasure.

"Stop!" said Cromwell, suddenly rising to his feet; "I take it up!"

"O, you take it up, do you?" retorted Bowers. "You!"

"I said so," returned John, quietly, at the same time beginning to pull his shirt over his head.

The bully was rather taken aback by the young man's coolness, but he was certainly not more astonished than the rest of us. I was but a boy myself at the time, and had met with my share of abuse from Bowers, while no one in the ship had been more uniformly kind and considerate with me than John Cromwell. It had never occurred to me that he, of all others, would be the man to face the hated bully in this way; but it was plain to me now, from his manner, that he really "meant business," as the sporting men have it.

"And what do you mean to do about it?" asked Bowers, in his usual blustering style.

"I mean to protect the boy from further abuse if I can," replied Cromwell. "Boys," he continued, addressing his shipmates generally, "you have all heard this man's chal-

lenge, and I am ready to meet him, buff to buff, and ask no favors, if the rest of you will see that I have fair play."

"You shall have it, Cromwell!" shouted five or six eager voices at once.

"Come on deck then," cried Bowers, "where there's more room!"

"No," said Cromwell, "there is room enough here. I know that, by the rules of the ship, we are not allowed to fight at all, and if we go on deck, we shall be stopped by the officers. If we begin it, we must go through with it; and I shall either thrash you, or else be thoroughly thrashed myself before I have done with you."

"Take away the ladder!" said two or three voices at once.

No sooner said than done; the ladder was unshipped from the cleets, and stowed up by the after bulkhead, leaving a clear ring for the two men. All this occurred during the dinner hour, while all hands were present; for we were cutting a sperm whale at the time, and had a "piece raised," when we were knocked off with orders to get our dinners at once, and be ready for a call.

Bowers, seeing that there was no backing out, prepared himself to do his best, though he was evidently troubled in mind by the perfect coolness of his antagonist. John Cromwell, when stripped to the waist, was not such a man as a connoisseur would be likely to bet his money on, appearing to have more flesh than muscular development. How my young heart beat as they stood up and faced each other! How I prayed, not aloud, but in secret, that John Cromwell might conquer him! How I trembled lest the longer-limbed and more wiry-looking Bowers might prove too much for him; for I knew that all depended on himself. No one could interfere to assist him, as "fair play" meant "fair play" for both men; no favors and no interference.

Bowers led off, making his attack with great vigor, as if he thought to frighten his young opponent, at the same time saying, in a taunting way, "Why don't you hit out? You'll find no child's play with me; I don't give any more lip than I'm ready to maintain;" but nothing could throw our wary young champion off his guard. I was ready to cry with delight; for, boy that I was, I could see that Cromwell was no novice, and though he had as yet confined himself to warding off the blows of the other, he had done so with success, and would return them

with interest when he thought the proper time had arrived. When Bowers paused to get breath, neither of them had yet received a mark; but John stood, cool and collected, with folded arms, waiting the next round, while the bully had evidently lost both strength and confidence in the first one. He saw no better way, however, than to force the fighting, and, after recovering his wind, he renewed the attack with the same fury as before, though he was careful not to waste his breath in tantalizing speeches. He became irritated at the coolness of his antagonist, and struck out blindly, exposing his face, and Cromwell, seeing his opportunity, "let out" for the first time, and planted a sounding blow in his forehead, which knocked him completely off his feet, and left him sitting on a chest which had brought him up as he staggered backward.

"Turn to, there! Man the windlass!" shouted the mate, down the scuttle; then, as he perceived that the ladder was removed, and that something unusual was in progress, he leaned over and looked down among us.

"What's the row here?" said he. He could see Cromwell, standing in fighting trim, the central figure of the group; but the other man was out of his range of vision.

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. West," said one of the men who stood nearly under him, "give us a few minutes to finish this now! It won't take us long, and we'll work with a will to make it up."

"Who's the other one?" asked Mr. West, in a low tone.

"Bowers, sir," answered the man, with a look as if he thought the name was a sufficient excuse for breaking the rules of the ship.

"O, that's it, is it?" said the mate, elevating his eyebrows. "Well, we can't be losing time now with a whale alongside."

He was gone again, and we judged he had gone aft to report to the old man.

"Come, Bowers," said Cromwell, "let's finish it up. We are keeping the whole duty of the ship waiting."

"Time!" called out two or three impatient voices.

Thus adjured, the bully stood up to his work again, and made desperate efforts to retrieve his lost ground, but in vain. He was hit three or four times in this round, and dropped, exhausted, into a seat, just as the mate's form again darkened the scuttle.

"Forecastle there! Hurry up that matter,

and man the windlass as soon as you get through!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded a dozen eager voices.

The shadow disappeared again, and there was no longer anything to interfere with an "honorable settlement" of the difficulty. Several voices called "Time!" again, and the men took their stations for the fourth round. This was a severe one, for Bowers was desperate, and John just getting warmed up to his work. He received two or three slight blows, but finished it by a tremendous one delivered full on the mouth of his adversary, which sent him spinning across the deck, "unshipping" some of his front teeth, and starting the blood freely from his upper lip.

"Enough!" said Bowers, sullenly, seeing the hopelessness of playing longer at a losing game.

"Ship that ladder, and pass down some water!" "Come on, let's turn to at once!" "Good for the old man, that he let us finish it out!" "That's the best job that's been done this cruise!" Everybody spoke up at once, as we all rushed on deck. Water was passed down for the late belligerents to wash themselves, and the rest of us mustered at our stations, ready for work.

"Got through below there?" asked Mr. West.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Heave away at the windlass then!"

John Cromwell soon made his appearance, looking none the worse, save a slight scratch or two, and went aft to the old man.

"Captain Adams," said he, respectfully, "I have been guilty of breaking the rules of the ship; but I interfered to protect a boy from abuse, and I am willing to be punished without complaint if I deserve it."

"I don't want to know anything about it," replied the old man, hastily, with a quizzical look. "I didn't see it, and don't know what you mean. Go to the windlass now, and let us make up for lost time."

It was easy to see where his sympathies were, and, in fact, those of every one else in the after part of the ship; for officers can judge, by various little things that come under their observation, how matters are going in the fore-castle, and, in most cases, are glad to find that any great wrong can be righted without their interference. This matter of fore-castle brawls is a difficult one to deal with. The general principle of quarter-deck law is, "I'll do all the fighting

myself, and if I find two men fighting, I shall punish them both." But it is often found necessary, or at least expedient, to depart from the rule, especially in cases like this, where there is reason to suppose that one of the parties is blameless, and must have been a very poltroon, a mere *swab*, so to speak, not to have acted just as he did. I have known cases where the two men were called aft on the main-deck, and allowed to "settle it" there, the captain himself seeing fair play; and again a hint would be given in this style: "I don't want to see any fighting on board my ship. Get out of my sight, both of you!" And a practical illustration would then be given of the old proverb, "Out of sight, out of mind." In the present instance, perhaps no other course could have been adopted which would have ended the difficulty so quickly, or so entirely to the satisfaction of all parties save one, and that one the only person guilty of any wrong.

The windlass went round "slip-slop," and our work went forward with a will. The bully, or, more properly speaking, the ex-bully, "turned to" with the rest; for although his face was considerably battered, he was not seriously hurt, physically speaking; but it was plain that he brooded over his defeat, and nursed his revenge for an opportunity. Nothing was said directly to him, or in his hearing, by his shipmates, though some sly allusions were made, aside, to the appearance of his swelled mouth, as that "Bowers had got more lip than he could maintain," in which we merely parodied a favorite expression of his own.

A few days after this occurrence, we were off Macauley's Island, commonly known among whalers as Goat Island, and a grand hunting excursion was planned in conjunction with an accidental consort, the barque Favorite. This island is stocked with goats, running wild in large herds, and also with wild hogs, but is otherwise uninhabited. We went ashore with six boats, three from each ship, thus mustering thirty-six men all told, and it was agreed to work in concert, and divide the results of the day's work. In the course of the day, we of course got scattered in groups and small parties, and the two ships' crews mingled together. We had secured some fifty goats, which were as many as we cared to have, and had them all tied, some down on the beach, and others high on the rocks, and so distributed, that, in some places, we found it expedient to carry up

lines, and lower them down steep precipices to the beach, rather than to back them down to the landing by long and circuitous routes.

While some parties were engaged in this way, and others were in pursuit of wild pigs, a sudden squall was seen rising, and the order was given to muster to the boats as fast as possible, and shove out for the ships. Muskets were fired as signals to men who were not within hearing of the voice, and the fog-horns were blown all along the beach; for the boats lay scattered at considerable distances apart for the better convenience of loading the captured animals, without being obliged to transport them all to one spot. Each boat got clear as soon as men enough could be collected to man her, not waiting for our proper respective crews; for the wind was rising fast, and the sky looked black and threatening. Whatever goats lay near at hand on the beach were tumbled into the boats, and the rest were abandoned, for the emergency admitted of no delay. Already the ships were clewing down their topsails, and preparing for the weather as fast as they could, short-handed as they were. We reached our ship without accident, and taking up the boats, shortened sail in time to save our spars and canvas; but we were none too soon, for before night it was blowing great guns, and we were lying to under storm-staysails. It was found that we had two of the Favorite's men on board, and had left two of our own, one of whom was John Cromwell. This was not important, however; if we became separated, we should rendezvous off the same island, and could then exchange the men. I could not help thinking of the poor goats left tied by the heels to starve to death on the rocks; but that could not be helped in some instances, though many had been cut adrift by different men where it was convenient to do so, after they found there was not time to get them down to the beach. All night and all the next day it blew a gale, and we lay to drifting, having lost sight of our consort during the night. We judged her to be to windward of us, as she was a much more weatherly vessel than the Madagascar.

After the gale blew itself out, we made sail to work up for the island; but in doing so, we discovered that our foretopmast was badly sprung, in fact, almost gone at the sheave-hole. This had probably been done when the squall first came on, by the combined power of the foretopsail and jib, as sail could

not be reduced with so few men fast enough to meet the crisis, nearly all hands being on shore. Be that as it might, however, the spar was worthless, for no sail could be carried on it. To send it down and replace it at sea was a critical job, unless we could depend upon two days of calm weather, which was hardly to be expected. It was possible to do it, perhaps, but it would be much safer and easier to make a harbor. So we bore up for New Zealand, and a few days afterwards came to anchor in Mangonui, where we sent down the topmast, and sent a new one aloft, crossed the yards, and put everything in its place, making a stay of only two days there. When ready to sail, it was discovered that Ned Bowers was missing. He had, doubtless, deserted, and gone ashore among the Maories. We were not surprised at this circumstance, nor was any one inconsolable at the loss. We made no search for him, but found another man on the beach who was glad of a chance to ship, and took our anchor and went to sea, anxious to make our way back to Macauley's to fall in with our consort.

We spoke the Favorite the second day after leaving Mangonui, and took her two men on board. We learned, to our astonishment, that Captain Braley had only one of ours. Cromwell was missing! The last boat that came off to the Favorite from the beach could muster only five men; but they had already waited as long as they dared, and all the signals in their power to make failed to find any more. They therefore shoved off, thinking that probably one of our boats must have had seven men, which would not be surprising under the circumstances. They lay to, like ourselves, that night and the next day, and when the weather moderated, made sail. They had hardly done so when they saw whales, and took one of them, and, as it was still rugged, they were detained all that day in cutting. But the next, being the third day after the gale came on, the ship was in near the land again, and lowered two boats, thinking to secure some of the goats which had been left tied on the rocks. On landing, they were surprised at not being able to find any. The goats had either broken their bonds, a case that could hardly be supposed to have occurred in every instance among so many, or, what was more probable, they had been liberated by some one. This last supposition was rendered a certainty by the discovery of the remains of a fire, and remnants of bones and meat near it, which, of course,

satisfied Captain Braley that a man had been there since his former visit, though of course he had no means of knowing, until he fell in with us, whether it was one of his own men or ours. He had scoured the island thoroughly, and fired signal guns in every direction; but no one was to be found, and the natural theory was, of course, that he had been taken off by some other ship, which might well have happened the day before, while he was delayed by cutting his whale.

After learning these facts, we could not be satisfied till we had made another visit to the island, still hoping to pick up some clue to the fate of Cromwell, as we thought it not unlikely he might have left some record to inform us of his safety, if he had indeed left the island in another ship. So we stretched across to Macauley's again, the Favorite still in company, and both captains went on shore. The charred remains of the fire were still there, as before, and a few bones lay near it, picked clean by the birds; but it was evident that no man was there, and no other marks of more recent date could be found.

We were about returning, disappointed, to the ship, when my attention was suddenly drawn to the appearance of a stone lying upon a still larger one, which looked as though it might have been lifted and placed there, rather than have found its present position by accidental causes. This lay directly in our track to and from the boat, and had been passed and repassed both by our men and the Favorite's; but now, as I glanced aside at it, I saw a piece of wood under it. I rolled over the stone, and found an old stave of a barrel, bleached and beach-worn, on which was the inscription, in lead pencil, "J. Cromwell, of ship Madagascar, taken off by ship Cicero;" then followed the date, which was the day that Captain Braley took his whale. Here, then, was the whole story; he had remained only two days on the island; and with our minds now fully relieved as to his safety, we pushed off, taking the barrel-stave with us. We soon after parted company with the Favorite, and months passed away in the usual routine of a voyage of this kind. We had no bully in the fore-castle now, and no cause for uneasiness about the fate of the young man who had humbled him, though we were all sorry to have lost so good a shipmate.

It was nearly a year afterwards that we went into the Bay of Islands to make our last port in the Pacific before sailing for home. It

was just at dark that we came to, and after furling the sails, I was standing in the waist, looking at a ship that lay anchored near us. She was a whaler, I knew; but I had not yet heard what ships were in port, and it was too dark when we anchored to make out her name. A boat put off from her, and pulled towards us. It was my first anchor-watch, and seeing no officer on deck, I went to the cabin door and reported to the mate, for the captain was on shore.

"Boat coming alongside, Mr. West."

"Where is she from?" he asked.

"From this ship nearest to us."

"All right," said he, coming up the stairs, "What boat is that?" he hailed, as she shot alongside of us.

"From the Cicero of New Bedford," answered the officer at the steering oar.

"The Cicero?" said Mr. West. "Have you got a man named John Cromwell on board?"

"Yes sir, here he is," answered John Cromwell himself, from the head of the boat, recognizing the mate's voice. "How do you do, Mr. West? I did not know this was the Madagascar until now."

Most hearty was the greeting that John received as he jumped in on deck; for all hands had got wind of it by this time, and crowded round him to hear his story.

"You knew I was in the Cicero," said John. "I suppose you found my post-office, then?"

"Yes," said I; "and I've got your letter now mailed up in the head of my trunk."

"Well, John," said the mate, "you'll want to have a yarn with the boys, so I'll hear your story by-and-by, when we are at leisure; for of course you'll go home in the ship with us?"

"Of course," he replied. "This is the ship that I belong to, though I can't say but I shall be sorry to leave the old Cicero."

The two mates went below together, and Cromwell sat down on the main hatch, the centre figure of the group, who closed up round him.

"Now, John," said I, "tell us how you came to be left on shore at Goat Island, for we've always wondered at that. You must have been a long way off not to have heard the guns and fog-horns."

"I did hear them," said John; "but just then I was hardly able to crawl, much less walk, though I knew my life was almost depending upon it."

"Why, were you hurt? You fell down the

rocks, did you?" said several of his shipmates, eagerly.

"Yes," said Cromwell, "I did fall; but the fall was not the result of accident."

"How was that?" asked everybody at once.

"Well, I may as well begin my story and go on with it."

"O, I see!" said I, for the first time giving utterance to a thought that had many times occurred to me. "I see; that scoundrel Bowers had something to do with it. Do you know, John, he ran away from us a few days after we lost you?"

"He's here ashore now," said Cromwell.

"He's here? Bowers? Have you seen him?" I asked.

"Yes," said John, "I have. But let me begin my story as I was going to do, when you interrupted me by jumping at conclusions. I came down to the boat, and got a coil of line to lower some of the goats down in certain places where the rocks were steep, and it was not easy to lug them down to the beach, and on my travels I fell in with Bowers alone. He had secured a fine old buck, and had tied him, and dragged him to the brow of a rock, where it rose perpendicularly about forty feet.

"I did not stop to say anything to him, for I knew he didn't feel well disposed towards me, as he had never seemed to get over the bitterness he felt after the set-to we had here in the fore-castle, but he hailed me, and asked me if I would bring my line, and lend him a hand to get his goat down to the beach. Of course I was willing, and indeed I was glad he had spoken to me, for I didn't want to hold any animosity against him and hoped he would feel as I did about it. So we bent on to the goat, and slung him over the edge of the precipice. There was no one below to receive and cast him off, but we thought as there was only one, we would lower him down and let go the line, and afterwards cast him off when we went down ourselves. We had perceived the bad weather coming on, and just as we were pushing the goat over the brow of the rock, we heard loud shouts from the direction of the boats. 'Well, we'll lower him down, anyhow,' said Bowers, 'now we've got started, it won't detain us but a minute.' Well, we both got hold of the line and lowered away, for he was a heavy animal, and we didn't want to let him go by the run, or, at least, I didn't; when all at once Bowers let go, throwing all the strain upon me. I sung out to him to lay hold with me, or else I

would have to let run, for the line was spinning through my hands so as to burn the skin, and turning my head aside to look at him, and urge him to help me, I saw him with the most devilish look in his ugly face that can be imagined, in the act of throwing a bight of the 'coil of line over my head! I know that I saw this, and you may imagine the feelings that were crowded into that one second of time, for I had not time to let go, or even to cry out before the line encircled me, and over I went after the goat, for he was 'sounding' heavy, but he was almost down to the beach before I left the top of the rock."

"One moment," said I. "I want to ask a question. Why did he throw the line round you, when he might have sent you over with the least push in the world, as you stood?"

"That's a pertinent question," said Cromwell, "and is put in the right place, although it breaks the thread of the story. I suppose the scoundrel did it to strengthen the evidence of accidental death. For, if I had been found dead there with the bight of the line around my body, it would have been thought conclusive proof that I had carelessly stepped my foot into the coil, and any coroner's jury would have found a verdict accordingly."

"That's true," said I. "But what a deliberating villain he must have been to think of that!"

"Yes, that's true," assented John; "but I can never be too thankful that he did think of it, for that was what proved my salvation. If he had pushed me off I should have fallen well out on the stones of the beach and been dashed to pieces, but the jirk of the line gave me a start in a perpendicular direction, straight after the goat, so that I landed square on top of him. The poor Billy was crushed to death but my life was saved, though I received a severe shock and must have lain insensible for a long time. When I became conscious, I heard a musket fired, and several loud blasts on a foghorn. Then all the noise ceased, and I suppose these signals must have been made by the last boat that pushed off. But it was certainly an hour or two before I recovered sufficiently to travel round a bend of the beach to a place where I could see the ships. They were then lying to under storm canvas, headed off shore, and it took both hands to hold my hat on my head."

"Well, what did you do then?" we asked.

"I made myself as comfortable as I could," said Cromwell. "I didn't feel very uneasy, for I knew the ships must return in a few days.

I had food enough, for there were the goats all tied by the heels, just as you left them. But one of the first things I did was to cut the poor things adrift, and let them run. I had matches in my pocket, thanks to my bad habit of smoking, so I had the means of making a fire, and I managed very well till the gale was over. The next day the Cicero hove in sight, and would have passed without stopping, but I built a fire up on the cliff, and made all the signals I could, till I drew their attention. They came ashore and took me off. I thought 'a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush,' and I had better not run the risk of waiting for my own ship."

"Well, now, John," said I, "explain about Bowers being here. You said you had seen him, yourself."

"Yes, I did," said Cromwell. "Last night I was ashore at the town of Korarika, below here, and I went into a little public house there and stayed a short time. When I came out again, I paused a moment under the lee of the house, to see if I could see any of the rest of the boat's crew, for they had scattered soon after we landed. It was very dark, and I could see no one. I struck a match against the side of the house to light my pipe, and, as the flame burst from it, it flashed full in the face of a man who was looking round the corner of the building. His body was hidden from sight, but the head was that of Ned Bowers. A startling change passed over his features as he recognized me; he glared fiercely upon me, and stepped out into view, drawing something from his shirt-front at the same time. He was dressed in ordinary seaman's rig, but by the set of his flannel shirt, I should judge that he had quite an array of concealed weapons under it. By the time I had made these observations, the flame of my match had died out, but I heard something like the cocking of a pistol, and darted back to the front of the house, not wishing to give him the opportunity which he seemed to want, of trying whether I was John Cromwell's ghost, or was really 'sensible to feeling as to sight.' He seemed to think better of it, however, for I directly heard a muttered oath, and then the patter of retreating footsteps, and caught a glimpse of a shadowy form moving swiftly off into the darkness towards the hills back of the town. It might have been half an hour after this that we were pushing the boat out to go on board, when we heard three musket shots fired in quick succession and in that direction among the hills,

but whether that had any connection with what I have been telling you I cannot say. You know there is a state of war existing between the mountain tribes and the English, and just now there is considerable anxiety felt by the whites down at Korarika, for the enemy are known to be prowling round in the vicinity, and the troops are sleeping on their arms up in the blockhouse there. I suppose there must be pickets posted over the hills yonder, night and day."

"Well, John," said I, "I don't believe he would have hit you, if he had fired at you, for you seem to bear a charmed life, and your luck would have cleared you in some way."

"I would rather not give him the chance," said John. "He's a desperate scoundrel, and wouldn't scruple to use any weapon or any means to work his revenge upon one he hates, though he doesn't mount many guns in a fist fight, as we have all seen."

The next day John Cromwell brought his few traps on board the Madagascar, and took up his old quarters among us, his chest and contents having been safely kept for him. We went ashore in the afternoon, John and I, on duty, and while waiting on the beach, a barge from an English brig-of-war landed a short distance from us. The seamen remained near their boat, and in a few minutes, several soldiers appeared bearing a sick or wounded man on a stretcher. As they drew nearer, we saw that he had a leg amputated. With a natural feeling of curiosity we approached the boat, and asked one of the seamen what was to be done with the man.

"O," said he, "we are going to carry him to a hospital further up the bay, where all the wounded are carried now, because we are expecting an attack here at Korarika every day."

"Is he a soldier or a sailor?" I asked.

"Well, he's neither one nor the other," answered the seaman, "though perhaps he's done something at both in his life, as well as some other callings not so honorable as either of them."

"But where or, how was he wounded?" inquired John.

"He was shot by the pickets over the hill there last night. He has been living among the Maories, and fighting on their side. He managed to get inside of the lines last night somehow, though I think," said he, lowering his voice, "they must have kept a lubberly kind of lookout to let him do it. But he wasn't so lucky in getting out again, he was

brought to and didn't answer the hail rightly, and so he got his leg broken with a shot."

By this time he was being lifted into the boat, and we approached and stooped over him; as his eyes opened and met those of Cromwell fixed upon him, he shuddered with terror.

"What! again?" said he, in a voice husky with pain and rage. "Will you always haunt me? Are you alive or not?"

"Yes. I'm alive, Bowers," said Cromwell, "thanks to your not having done your work too thoroughly. But I shall not haunt you long. Come," said he, aside to me, "let us go. I have seen enough."

"It will be as well for him if he dies of the wound," said the landlord of the little public house, "for he'd be hung as a spy if he recovers, and besides he proves to be a man that the police have been on the lookout for these two years. He ran away from the convict station at Norfolk Island, got off in a vessel, and went down among the islands, but how he drifted back here nobody knows."

Of course we knew, John and I, but we kept our own counsel. We heard within a week afterwards, that gangrene had set in, and Bowers had defrauded the gallows by dying of his wound.

THE BURNING OF THE GASPEE.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

I SHALL never again meet one who remembers events antecedent to the Revolution, yet one such I have known. Her headstone is almost hidden by briery vines, in a plot less a "cemetery" than a "graveyard," for a cemetery should not grow blackberries. A tavern is a hotel, unless the paint be off and the chimney-top show unsightly seams; then a hotel is a tavern; and so of cemeteries and graveyards. Twenty years ago, a grim blackman deposited the old lady at this place. "Tomb" or "sepulchre" we may call her house, but the worms know it to be a grave—though that is a bitter, bitter word, from which the sugar-coating will keep getting off.

Like all aged people, Mrs. Ferguson delighted in retrospection. "Dear me," she said, speaking of the far past, "what a time it was when John left us—poor brother John! He has been at rest for years and years, and it makes no difference now whether he served king or congress; but it did then. Let me see, I was born in '61, so I must have been nine years old when John went away, for that was in 1770. John was born in '53—fifty-three and seven are sixty, and ten makes seventy—yes, in the year '70, John was seventeen.

"I well remember his departure and all the details attending it. Mr. Brown had a vessel, a brig, I think it was—two masts, isn't that a brig?"

"Well, yes," said Uncle Benjamin, "if it has yards across, and braces, and buntlines, and bowlines, and clew-garnets, and reef-tackles—in fact, if it be two-thirds of a ship, it is a brig."

"Bless me, you must have a good memory! Well, John went in the vessel, whether brig or not; he had always been crazy to go to sea. The captain allowed him to put on board a 'venture' to sell at Havana, and I recollect how proud he seemed in his new character of merchant. He would bring home coffee and sweetening enough to last us a lifetime, and I think all the young men of the neighborhood were in expectation of cigars—then an unusual luxury—and all the children of oranges.

"When the vessel went down the river, mother cried. We could see it plainly from

the high land where we lived, and I remember it had a broad, English flag flying, for we were under King George then; bright scarlet—its arms a red cross upon a blue field. It was a very handsome flag, as much so as our present stars and stripes; showy, and with a substantial look, as if the ensign of a great people.

"After John was gone, mother found little enjoyment in anything; she wondered how her boy was faring; she wished he could have some of our good, warm breakfast; and one morning, when she opened the door of the room where he used to sleep, and looked at his couch, so still, and undisturbed, she wept bitterly. It was a pity, I thought, that John's bed could not have gone away with him; for its loneliness was like a voice that mother could hear.

"At length father came home one day with a letter inscribed, in red characters, 'By Ship.' It was from John; a pretty scratchy-looking letter, I remember; written, he said, after his day's work at discharging cargo was finished. What love it breathed for us, and how proud the young sailor seemed of his nautical acquirements. He introduced a great many sea terms, more than necessary, I dare say, just as your story writers do."

"Well," said Uncle Benjamin, "if he did not say 'Shiver my timbers!' I can forgive all the rest. That ejaculation makes fine capital for writers, but I never heard a sailor use the expression in all my life."

"No," continued Mrs. Ferguson, "he did not say that; but he talked fluently of 'star-board,' and 'larboard,' and 'halyards,' and 'weather earrings,' just as if he expected us to say, 'There, now we know.' He remained at Havana two or three months, and in one of his letters described the tedious manner of loading; the molasses being sent in from the country in small casks, slung upon mules; a dreadful slow way of transportation, I should say."

"It is not so now," said Uncle Benjamin. "I have hoisted cargo from three in the morning until ten at night. Empty casks are stowed in the hold, then hogsheads of molasses hoisted on deck, and those below filled from them through a leather hose."

"Ah, yes," said the old lady, smiling; "it cannot harm us to know how things are done. Well, at last we heard that the *Moro Castle*, John's vessel, had sailed for home. Whenever the south wind blew, mother looked anxiously down the bay; at morning she thought he must surely come before night; and, once or twice, in the hazy atmosphere, she mistook the trees of neighboring islands for masts; then at evening, he would come ere the morning; but he came not. Forty days passed; fifty, sixty, seventy; and it was hard to say when hope should end, and mourning should begin. The neighbors gave us all the consolation they could; they recalled the long passages of which fathers or brothers had told them, or which themselves had made. Old Captain Gifford had been seventy-nine days from Havana—vessel covered with ice, heavy gales ahead. Whenever he was too far west, the wind would haul 'nor'ard and east'ard,' and stay there; and when he was too far east, it would haul 'nor'ard and west'ard,' and blow so that four men could hardly hold one man's hair on! Yet now Captain Gifford was at home, alive and well.

"After listening to such accounts, mother would feel better for a time; and even on the eightieth day, she thought of Captain Gifford's seventy-nine, and this was but one day more; and the ninetieth was but eleven days more, and a long, northerly gale might have made the difference. But between the ninety-ninth and one hundredth day, mother's spirits sank rapidly. A hundred sounds vastly larger than ninety-nine; with its two ciphers between her heart and hope, she could only weep in agony. He would not come now, we knew that; and we thought how the seasons would revolve—the planting, the mowing, the harvest of the corn—how they would return again and again, and bring not him we loved. How tedious would seem our daily occupations, and to what end?

"Two years passed, and we had begun to take a sickly interest in events of the day, when brother Charles, now seventeen, who had for some months been humming old songs, like the 'Tempest' or 'Captain Death,' came home one day from the neighboring town, and told us that one Captain Lindsay, with whom he had accidentally become acquainted, and who commanded a sloop called the *Hannah*, wished to engage him as a hand on board his vessel. At first, mother would not listen to the proposition; but as father

knew Captain Lindsay to be an excellent man, and as Charles had evidently arrived at the determination, that unless he could be a sailor he would be nothing, and especially as the voyage was to be only to New York, she at last consented. But even a New York voyage was, at that day, of great magnitude. The passage through Hell Gate was painted by mariners in frightful colors. The 'Race,' at the eastern end of the Sound, was a strait mentioned not without solemnity; and Brenton's Reef and the 'Dumplings,' off Newport, were associated with shipwreck and gloom.

"It was a sad day in our household, when the sloop *Hannah* went plowing down the Narragansett. We watched her sail till it faded in what is called the 'West Passage,' and hoping that she might not strike upon 'Whale Rock,' or drift ashore upon 'Beaver Tail,' we left all to destiny, and tried to be happy; but it was a gray kind of happiness, like summer in November. It was that state of feeling through which common events become more impressive and fixed in memory, just as a red-leaved tree is more distinctly remembered than a green one.

"The 'Boston Massacre,' of two years previous, was now an old story, but our interest in the acts of Britain was revived by the conduct of some naval officers at Newport. A saucy little schooner, called the *Gaspee*, had lately arrived there, whose commander took it upon himself to overhaul, as a sailor would say, all vessels that did not show what he conceived a proper deference to his greatness. More than once, after hearing the sound of cannon towards the mouth of the bay, we discovered that the *Gaspee* had 'brought to' a coaster, in mere wantonness. You know the old doggerel says:

"'No honest coaster could pass by,
But what they would let some shot fly.'

"As the time drew near for the *Hannah* to return, mother grew more and more anxious. Since the loss of her oldest boy, the weakness of her nerves had caused her to magnify every danger threatening other members of the family. Charles might be killed by a shot from the *Gaspee*, or seized by her unscrupulous commander and forced to serve in the king's vessel. To a 'mind diseased,' the improbability of evil results counts for nothing, so long as such results are possible.

"A grim Narragansett Indian, an undoubted descendant of the great Miantonomah, had seen the 'canoe with the big thunder' chase

and overtake a vessel close by the lighthouse at Warwick; and though this vessel was certainly not the Hannah, yet the incident increased mother's uneasiness. 'Shooting Star,' the Indian, had been a firm friend of John's, and feeling equal interest in brother Charles, he kept a sharp lookout for Captain Lindsay's returning sail. We all thought much of Shooting Star, for with John he had trapped the otter and marten, or encountered the fierce gray wolf, a race not then wholly banished from the Narragansett swamps. And now the red man looked for Charles as he had once before looked, O how vainly, for John!

"One day, when the wind blew strongly, we saw a sloop beating up the bay, and from some peculiarity which only a sailor would have remarked, Captain Gifford pronounced it to be the Hannah. Considerably astern of this vessel was another, which he said was a topsail schooner. Presently we saw a wreath of smoke curl up from the latter, and heard a gun. She was firing upon the Hannah! I cannot describe our excitement. Then, in spite of the strong wind, the Hannah set another sail, a three-cornered one, a gaff-topsail, I think the old captain called it. Away under the eastern shore, she tacked and stood west, directly towards us; and the captain said this was her losing tack, because the wind was northwest. Close in by the shore she came, almost at our feet, rolling the foam in a cataract, and lying nearly on her side. Charley, who was tending the jib sheet, as father said, waved his hand to us, and Captain Lindsay shouted, though we could not distinguish his words, and pointed up the bay, as if to indicate that he would give his pursuer a hard trial on the next stretch. Then the sails shook, and the sloop turned her bow from land."

"Went about," murmured Benjamin.

"Yes, went about, Benjamin—no doubt that's orthodox—and headed right for Providence River."

"That's your sort!" I heard old Captain Gifford say. 'The Gaspee will need a good pilot shortly; she draws more water than the sloop.'

"The English vessel did not come as near us as the Hannah had done, but tacked when well off shore; I could, however, plainly see the men on board, the most prominent figures among them being the marines or soldiers, dressed in red coats. In the middle of the deck—"

"Amidships," suggested Uncle Benjamin, quietly.

"No doubt that is the term, Benjamin, and I should speak by 'the shipman's card'; but these things are so difficult. Amidships was a glittering object which father said was the pivot-gun, and just before the vessel turned around—went about, I mean—it was fired. Then he saw a round hole through one of the Hannah's sails, but mother did not perceive this, and was too far from the rest of us to hear Captain Gifford's comments. Father had told her that the war vessel was firing only blank cartridges, and this assurance gave her some comfort.

"Both vessels were soon at a considerable distance from us, and while intently watching the Gaspee, I thought, at length, that she seemed to stand still. Then her sails flapped to and fro, and were all lowered with such alacrity as to remind me of the shutting of an umbrella. Captain Gifford, old as he was, leaped clear of the earth.

"Blessed England!" said he, for patriotism had not yet estranged him from the old channels of expression, 'blessed England! she's aground! High water; tide just turning; wind nor'west. She's fastened for the next twelve hours; good, good, good!'

"Towards sunset, squads of people were seen upon the shores. Father went to Providence to look after Charles, and old Shooting Star, from his home in the Narragansett woods, came to our door with an 'ugh' more emphatic than usual, then trotted along the shore to join those who were nearer the vessel. Soon he returned, and at a dog-ambule started off for his abode.

"Twilight thickened, and the king's schooner grew dim upon the bleak strand; first the masts, like old leafless tree trunks, and then the dark hull, utterly fading away. At length Shooting Star returned, and with him another Indian, but they made no pause, and passed on up the shore. Father was yet absent, but we doubted not that the Hannah had arrived at Providence, and were in momentary expectation of his return with Charles. As it grew toward midnight, however, we felt a vague alarm. What could so long detain our absent ones?

"The wind was now still, and about eleven o'clock, from the direction in which the vessel lay, we heard the report of firearms. Soon after, a light spot showed itself against the black stretch of the opposite shore, and then a narrow flame, no higher than a man, shot

up and flickered and broadened. It caught at some substance above, and crawled rapidly aloft. Presently a great volume of fire, overwhelming the first feeble column, burst from below, showing masts, and black spars, and furled sails, as if they had been within a stone's throw of us.

"Blessed England! it is the Gaspee!" cried old Captain Gifford. "Who has done this deed?" The old man had hobbled to our door.

"Soon after this the schooner blew up, and the furniture of our house rattled and jarred by the fearful concussion. In a few hours father returned with brother Charles, and in their company were Shooting Star and his comrade. Both father and Charles had a singular appearance, as if they had attempted to remove some dark substance from their faces, but had only partially succeeded. Great was mother's rejoicing over Charles; it dispelled the nervousness she felt at the strange events of the night.

"Father informed us that they four, with sixty others, all dressed as Indians, had boarded and burned the Gaspee—

"Set the people on the land,
And burned her up, we understand."

"The young Indian who accompanied Shooting Star remained silent at the door, but the descendant of Miantonomah was more sociable than usual.

"What if hear from son John?" he asked. "Suppose son John no dead—suppose catch more otter in swamp?"

"O," said mother, "do not speak so!"

"Suppose me hear from son John? Suppose me see him? me bring him home? No hurt, no frighten—John no spirit—me see John alive? You no be scared, me bring him?"

"This strange address startled us, but obeying Shooting Star's gesture, father followed him out doors, while mother nearly fainted. In a short time they returned.

"Mary," said father, "I have heard strange news. You know we have always thought it possible that John might somewhere be alive. Do not faint—there, there, Mary! I feared so." And he placed mother almost lifeless in a chair. In a moment she revived; a strength unusual seemed to bear up her spirit, and father continued, "John may yet return; he is not dead, he is not dead, Mary!"

"O, for Heaven's sake, tell me all!" said mother; "tell me all, and I will be strong. My poor lost one—where is he?"

"Here, mother, here!"

"It was John's voice that answered, it was John's foot upon the threshold. He had washed the dark stain from his face, and flung aside his blanket. Mother looked wildly in his brown eyes, then fell upon his neck. After long weeping, she spoke: 'O John, John! and is the old sorrow really gone?'"

"At last her calmness returned, and then we all sat down to hear John's story. His vessel, upon the homeward passage, had been robbed by Bellamy the pirate, who sailed in the Whidah frigate. This notorious buccaneer, being short of men, compelled John and one other to enter his service. While the ship was taking in water, at an uninhabited spot in Jamaica, the two men found means to escape to the woods. Subsequently they were seized by a British press-gang and conveyed on board the Jersey, seventy-four, then at Port Royal. Thence they were transferred to the Gaspee, which soon after sailed for Newport. Here John was surprised to learn that the vessel from which Bellamy had taken him had never reached home, having probably gone down in a great gale which the pirate ship herself encountered soon after parting with the merchantman. On the very day of the Gaspee's destruction, John had escaped from her, and, apprehensive of pursuit should he return home, had sought shelter with his old friend Shooting Star. While on board the Gaspee, he had been so closely watched that no communication between himself and the shore was possible until the moment of his escape; and finally, his singular manner of revealing himself to us had arisen from a wish to surprise, joined with a hesitancy at the abruptness of such a proceeding. His American shipmate, upon the capture of the Gaspee, took a very informal farewell of Lieutenant Duddington her commander.

"For three years brother John was not without fear of arrest; then came Lexington and Bunker Hill; and Britain had no more jurisdiction over the soil of our country. O, how often John told us his story. His cruise with Bellamy was of itself a romance, and so of his strange wandering in the woods of Jamaica. Poor John! he had no more love for the sea, and we were all so glad!" concluded the good old lady.

"Now for to find these people out,
King George does offer very stout,"

hummed Uncle Benjamin; but he had forgotten the rest, and so have I.